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The influence of right-wing populist parties on the national policies towards the Russian Federation: the case of the Progress Party (Norway) and the Danish People's Party / Влияние правых популистских партий на национальную политику в отношении к Российской Федерации: случай Партии прогресса (Норвегия) и Датской народной партии

Филипович Алекса

аспирант, кафедра Кафедра европейских исследований, Факультет международных отношений, Санкт-Петербургский Государственный Университет

191060, Россия, Ленинградская Область область, г. Санкт-Петербург, ул. Улица Смольного, 1/3, подъезд № 8

✉ aleksa.filipovic89@gmail.com



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Аннотация.

Целью данного исследования является определение степени влияния Партии прогресса (Норвегия) и Датской народной партии на политику своих национальных правительств в отношении к России. Партия прогресса была членом правительственной коалиции Норвегии с 2013 по 2020 год, в то время как Датская народная партия оказывала поддержку датским коалиционным правительствам с 2015 по 2019 годы. Анализ происхождения, идеологий, политических программ и политики партий более точно объясняет их позицию по России, а также определяет уровень их политической воли к участию во влиянии на политику правительства по отношению к ней. Методология, использованная в данном исследовании, состоит из контент-анализа, который использовался при исследовании официальных документов Партии прогресса и Датской народной партии, а также сравнительного анализа, который использовался при анализе политических программ обеих партий, а также различные результаты выборов и другие соответствующие данные. Можно сделать вывод, что обе стороны оказывают незначительное влияние на правительства своих стран на государственную политику в

отношении к Российской Федерации. Кроме того, они оба выразили отсутствие политической заинтересованности в том, чтобы сделать Россию центром внимания в своих внешнеполитических программах. Не будучи ни русофильными, ни русофобскими по своему характеру, их присутствие в правительстве не стало причиной ни ухудшения, ни улучшения отношений с Россией.

Ключевые слова: Партия прогресса, Датская народная партия, Норвегия, Дания, Россия, правый популизм, Страны Северной Европы, Арктика, Баренцево море, Балтийское море

Introduction

The rise of support for populist right-wing politics in Europe is a topic that is in recent years constantly capturing the headlines in both academic literature and mass media. There is no doubt that this topic will be even more expanded in the first half of the 2020s, especially with the proximity of the new cycles of European national parliament and presidential elections. It cannot be denied that the Central and Eastern Europe are experiencing a surge of support for right-wing populist parties and movements. The examples include Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance (*Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség*), the Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) in Poland, the Freedom Party of Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*), the Freedom and Direct Democracy (*Svoboda a přímá demokracie*) in Czech Republic, The Slovak National Party (*Slovenská národná strana*) and the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (*Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond*) among others. [\[1-2\]](#)

The Europe's Nordic region is no exception in this regard. Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark all have significant and well-established right-wing populist presence within their political system. The main political parties of such orientation include the Finns Party (*Perussuomalaiset*), the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*), the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*) in Norway, and the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*).

The Nordic region is of special importance for Russia, given its proximity to the strategic Arctic region and the Northern Sea Route. Additionally, countries such as Denmark and Norway are member states of the NATO, and both are seeing this military alliance as the cornerstone of their national defense and security policy. With the coming finalization of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project, the energy supply and security of Europe will also depend to a certain degree on the political climate in the Northern Europe. The emergence of China's ambition to become an Arctic country, as well as the development of programs for peaceful cooperation between the Arctic states rounds-up the reasons for careful monitoring of the political developments among the countries in the region. This is especially true for those countries that can perhaps change the political orientation by including right-wing populist options in their national governments.

The Nordic-Russian relations are far from simple ones, as they may appear at the first glance. Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are all sharing mutual heritage, culture and worldview. Nevertheless, they are not monolithic with their foreign and defense policies. Denmark and Norway are part of the NATO and are strongly supporting the alliance's presence in the region while Sweden and Finland are not. Nevertheless, they are participating in the Partnership for Peace program, while having officially proclaimed their military neutrality. At the same time, Finland, Sweden and Denmark are members of the European Union. While Norway did not join the EU, it is a member state of the Schengen Area and the European Economic Area (EEA).

Thus, even though the regional relations do not seem so complex in their nature, in reality they are. Any radical political changes that can occur can deeply impact political and security reality in the region. From the perspective of the Russia government, it is important to follow these political developments closely, to understand the positions and proclaimed policies of the right-wing populist parties that are obtaining high support among the voters, and to assess what the future foreign and security policies of such parties towards it could be. This article is dedicated to one such assessment, as it will analyze policies towards Russia of two right-wing populist political parties that were, or still are a part of national governments. Due to the fact that they are the only two right-wing populist parties of their countries that were able to be recognized as a viable coalition partners by other political options of their nation-states, the main question will be to which degree and desire they had a political will and capital to influence governmental policies towards the Russian Federation - and if that is on their political and ideological agenda at all.

Methodology

Methodology applied in this research, consists of the content-analysis, which was used during the research of the official documents of the Progress Party and the Danish People's Party, as well as comparative analysis, which was used during the analysis of political programs of both parties, as well as the parliament election results and other relevant data. The aim of this research is to determine the degree of influence of the Progress Party and the Danish People's Party on their national governments' policies towards Russia. The object of this research is identified as the right-wing parties of Nordic region, and the subject of this research are the two right-wing political parties of these countries, the Progress Party and the Danish People's Party.

A short overview of prominent Nordic right-wing parties

The political party from this region that is recently capturing perhaps the most headlines in the mass media is the Swedish opposition party Sweden Democrats, who, after the 2018 Swedish parliament elections and 17.5% of won votes, was the cause of the unprecedented post-election crisis in the country.^[3] As of December 2019, Sweden Democrats score even higher on the opinion pools, reaching a historic 24.4% of support among the Swedish voters.^[4] This in effect means that, if the next Swedish parliament elections were to hypothetically take place in January 2020 instead in September 2022 when they are regularly due to occur, every fifth registered voter in Sweden would cast their vote in the ballot box for this right-wing populist party.

The Finns Party is also currently an opposition party, which briefly participated in the Finnish coalition government from 2015-2017. The political schism inside the party which occurred after internal leadership elections and successive return of the hardliner leadership proved to be too much for their coalition partners, who casted them out of the government. Consequently, the Finns Party experienced a sharp drop in the support (to a less than 10%), and it looked like it would have hard time to recover, especially due to the return to the hardline politics and leadership.^[5, pp.57-61] Nevertheless, party demonstrated that it can not only adapt to the new reality, but that it can also find a fertile ground among the Finnish public for its message. At the 2019 Finnish parliament elections, the Finns Party managed to win 17.5% of votes, and by December 2019, the support for the party among the Finnish voters was registered to be at 24.3%, making it in effect the largest political force in the country for now.^[6-7]

From June 2015 until June 2019, the Danish People's Party provided parliamentary support for the center-right minority coalition government. After the 2019 elections in Denmark and unsatisfactory election result, the Danish People's Party became again an oppositional party. Its 8.4% support among the voters in January 2020 does not significantly differ since their election result of 8.7% from June 2019.^[8] Nevertheless, the party did manage to influence the governmental policies and public opinion, especially on the issues such as immigration and crime.

The Progress Party in Norway was until January 2020 the only right-wing populist party that was participating in the national government as a full coalition member. Since 2013, the Progress Party was a member of the center-right coalition government. The party started to experience a steady decline in support since the 2009 Norwegian parliament elections, at which it managed to win historically high 22.9% of the votes. During the 2013 and 2017 parliament elections, it was visible that the support for the party started to decline, as it obtained 16.3% and 15.2% of votes respectively.^[9] As of January 2020, the support for the party is even further in decline, as the pooling agencies place it at 11.4%.^[10] It remains to be seen during the 2021 Norwegian parliament elections if the party will manage to reverse this trend of decline of the support and if it will still be a part of the governmental coalition after them. Nevertheless, this party proved to be stable and desirable coalition partner, and it is highly likely that it will continue to participate in the government after the next parliament elections, and exercise their influence on national policies.

Characteristics of Nordic right-wing populism

Before the more in-depth analysis of these political actors, their ideology, policies and degree of their influence on national policies towards Russia is conducted, it is important to understand the characteristics of the Nordic right-wing populism, and why the examined political parties are classified by the scholars as members of the "populist radical-right" party family.

Ann-Cathrine Jungar and Anders Ravik Jupskås described the traditional Nordic party systems via the "five-party" model, consisting of the social-democratic, communist/left-wing, conservative, agrarian and liberal party families.^[11, p.1] Nevertheless, Jungar and Jupskås note that populist radical right party family has also been established in the Nordic party system, with the main representatives being the Sweden Democrats, the Finns Party and the Danish People's Party. The common characteristics that these parties share include similar populist ideology, anti-establishment position, authoritarian position in sociocultural policy, fairly centrist position in socioeconomic policy, nationalist position based on their name as well as transnational connectivity to their European counterparts. Jungar and Jupskås further observe that the Norwegian Progress Party has some difficulties to fit in this list, as it can be considered authoritarian and more economically right-wing compared to the other three parties, although it is equally anti-establishment and anti-immigration one. Thus, Jungar and Jupskås believe that the Progress Party is seen more as a hybrid between the populist radical party and a more traditional conservative party.^[11, p.2]

Although sharing similar political traits, Jungar and Jupskås note that the origins of these parties differ from one another. The Finns Party is usually seen as the successor party of the Finnish Rural Party (*Suomen Maaseudun Puolue*), which was ideologically linked to the agrarian populism and social conservatism. The Danish People's Party and the Progress Party were products of a the neoliberal populist wave that emerged in the early 1970s, with the Danish People's Party seen as a spiritual successor of the Danish Progress Party

(*Fremskridtspartiet*). The Sweden Democrats were founded at the end of the 1980s, and were considered more militant and extreme right than their sister parties. [\[11, p.2\]](#)

In further explanation of the Nordic populist radical-right (also known as "extreme right", "far right" or "right-wing populist") party family, Jungar and Jupskås state that the consensus of most scholars is that the basic features of such a party family is further consisting of authoritarian position on sociocultural issues, support for strong welfare state and opposition to redistributive politics through progressive taxation ("right-wing egalitarianism"), transnational linkages between the various parties, as well as with the party names, which are reflecting their nationalistic aspirations. [\[11, pp.3-6\]](#)

Authoritarian position on sociocultural issues is understood as exclusionist and ethnically based form of nationalism, where nation-state should remain as culturally and ethnically homogenous as possible. This is achieved through strict assimilationist, anti-immigration policies and strong criticism of multiculturalism. Additionally, it includes strict law-and-order policies, pro-militaristic views, cultivation of the traditional family values, as well as skepticism towards the LGBTQ and gender rights. [\[11, pp.3-6\]](#)

The socioeconomic policy, described as a strong support for the welfare state (which is policy traditionally expressed by the left-wing parties), emerged in the right-wing populist party programs during the last couple of decades, as of the electorate of Nordic countries have become increasingly "proletarianized". [\[11, pp.3-6\]](#) The strong welfare state can also be seen as something woven in the very fabric of the Nordic society, and thus it may not be seen so paradoxical for the right-wing populist parties to support such usually left-wing socioeconomic policies. The names of right-wing populist parties should also be considered as an additional indicator of commitment to the "*fundamental values of the party family*", by utilizing the words and concepts such as "national", "people's party", "democratic" etc. in their name. [\[11, pp.3-6\]](#)

Anders Widfeldt notes that the growth of the right-wing populism challenged Nordic political systems. In a region traditionally considered tolerant and prosperous, right-wing populist parties seek to drastically change the public discourse and debate over migration issues, usually disseminating anti-Islamic and xenophobic messages. [\[12, pp.2-3\]](#) Widfeldt observes that while there is still an open debate in the academic community on how these parties should be labeled ("far right", "populist right", "extreme right", "radical right" etc.), such parties are without doubt radical in a sense that they argue for a profound change in migration policies and are often unwilling to compromise on this issue. They should be considered "right-wing" based on their ethnocentric position and multiculturalism, and "conservative" regarding their views on gender and family relations, as well as towards the process of the European integration. Thus, such parties are in Widfeldt's opinion best described as "radical right", as they combine negative view on migration with anti-establishment rhetoric and authoritarian views on law and order. [\[12, pp.2-3\]](#)

Natalia Eremina and Sergei Seredenko note that such anti-establishment and especially anti-EU integration messages that right-wing populist parties disseminate are connected to the opinion of those parties that the European integration has opened borders for alien cultures and increasingly stirred up traditional societies, jeopardizing the very advancement of European civilization. [\[13, pp.54-56\]](#) Eremina and Seredenko further note that for such right-wing ideologies, the state and the nation are the core entities coinciding with each other. [\[13, p.56\]](#) Thus any weakening of the national sovereignty would endanger national

interests and undermine the social unity. Additionally, such parties strongly advocate for the supremacy of the national law over any supranational one (i.e. EU's). The main Nordic right-wing populist parties are no exception to this, as it can be seen from their official political programs. [\[13, pp.61-67\]](#)

Nordic right-wing parties in the EU parliament

Jungar and Jupskås observe that although these kinds of parties may seem to have potential for the transitional linkages between themselves and the other similar parties in Europe, there are many obstacles for that, such as their strong nationalist ideology, ideological heterogeneity, personal rivalry and domestic political conditions. [\[11, p.5\]](#) Nevertheless, during the recent years and especially in the European Parliament, there are initiatives for grouping of likely-mined right-wing populist parties into political party blocks. Two such groups exist as of today, Identity and Democracy (*Identité et démocratie*) and the European Conservatives and Reformists.

The Identity and Democracy political group of the European Parliament is the most recently formed one, having been established in June 2019. It consists of the major national right-wing populist parties such as French National Rally (*Rassemblement national - ex-Front National*), Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*), Freedom Party of Austria, Danish People's Party, Conservative People's Party of Estonia, the Finns Party, Freedom and Direct Democracy, Northern League (*Lega Nord*) and Flemish Interest (*Vlaams Belang*). [\[14\]](#)

The major national right-wing populist parties in the European Conservatives and Reformists EU Parliament groups are Law and Justice, UK's Conservative and Unionist Party (colloquially known as Tories), Sweden Democrats, Vox, Brothers of Italy (*Fratelli d'Italia*), and Slovakian Freedom and Solidarity (*Sloboda a Solidarita*) among others. [\[15\]](#) The existence of the two right-wing political blocks in the European Parliament demonstrates that the obstacles that such parties face in transnational linkages are real and not easy to overcome. It remains to be seen whether these divided blocks will be able to come to some unifying agreement, remain at the current status-quo or even initiate division into more political party blocks.

Transformation of Nordic right-wing parties

Nordic right-wing populist parties have two more characteristics that can make them somewhat different than their counterparts in the rest of the Europe. They are both highly adaptable and pragmatic in nature. There is no doubt that they are less burdened with ideological purity during the political calculations than other mainstream parties (especially left-wing ones), while having a good sense of relevancy for the issues in the society they are openly speaking about. Sweden Democrats demonstrated this when they underwent a thorough process of rebranding and moderation, and turned from a political pariah into a major political force in less than a decade. [\[3\]](#) The Finns Party also demonstrated that when after major party split and the loss of governmental position, they managed to return back to their previous highs in just five years. Thus, even though that both Danish People's Party and the Progress Party are experiencing drop for their support among the voters, they shouldn't be looked upon as a dying force in politics. If such parties revealed anything during the last two decades, it is that they are more than capable to achieve a strong comeback to the political arena after an election defeat, to the surprise of the majority of their political opponents.

1. Norway: the Progress Party

1.1. Progress Party's origins, ideology and policies

The Progress Party's origin can be traced back to 1973, when a Norwegian journalist Andres Lange established a party that was mostly based on a libertarian protest movement against high taxes, naming it "Anders Lange's Party for a Strong Reduction in Taxes, Duties and Public Intervention" (*Anders Langes Parti til sterk nedsettelse av skatter, avgifter og offentlige inngrep – ALP*). [16] Lange was a critic of both the high state intervention in Norway, and what he viewed as welfare state's over-regulation. [17] The message that his party disseminated proved popular among Norwegian voters, as on the elections that were held the same year in which ALP was conceived he managed to win five percent of the votes and a right to be represented in the Norway's parliament, Storting. [17] The reason for such a political breakthrough of Lange's party in the relatively stable Norwegian political system was explained as a combination of factors, such as Lange's charismatic personality and media presence, a change of the voting patterns of the Norwegian population after the polarizing referendum on Norway's accession to the European Community in 1972, and the growth of the anti-tax sentiment in the public. [17] After the death of Lange in 1974 and the following internal disputes in the party, and with the election of the Carl I. Hagen as the chairman in 1978, the party's name was changed to the Progress Party. In the following two decades, the Progress Party changed its main political message from protesting against taxes and regulation to being the anti-crime and anti-immigrant voice on the Norwegian political scene, while at the same time changing the critique of welfare state to demands for better care of the ethnic-Norwegian inhabitants. [17]

The Progress Party of nowadays describes itself as a libertarian party that believes in "freedom for the individual, lower taxes, prosperity and a limited government that empowers people", while being established on the "Norway's constitution, Norwegian and Western tradition, and cultural heritage based on Christian philosophy". [18-19], The party leadership state that their policies are based on the people's government, with decentralized political power, and decision in elected bodies and are employed to legislate binding referendums as part of the constitutional system. [19] As it is explained in their 2017-2021 Principles Program, the party's ideological foundation is liberalism, with the main goal being a sharp reduction in taxes, fees and public intervention. [20, p.2] The party proclaims that it distances itself from any form of discrimination of people based on gender, religion or ethnic origin, and that it strives to protect the rights proclaimed by the Constitution of Norway, such as property rights, business freedom, personal freedom, freedom of expression, religious freedom and organizational freedom. [20] Among their main points of political program, the Progress Party singles out lowering of taxes, healthcare and the care of the elderly citizens, stricter immigration policy, improvements to infrastructure and reforms for more stricter criminal justice system. [21-22]

Considering the immigration issue, the Progress Party states that Norwegian welfare society is "totally dependent on a strict and responsible immigration policy", and that the government must ensure that those who come to Norway and stay there are fully integrated into the society. Interestingly, the Progress Party underlines that Norway must avoid immigration "experiments" which may lead them to becoming "like Sweden". [23] The Progress Party suggests creation of asylum centers in Africa and Asia, where refugees will be able to seek an asylum from their own neighborhood. Additionally, the Progress Party advocates transportation of the refugees rescued in the Mediterranean Sea back to their home countries, as well as p the refugees to embark on life-threatening voyages. [24]

The Progress Party also gives considerable attention to the country's police force, stating that the reforms introduced in 2015 by the coalition government (which Progress Party was a part of) are now giving results. Given the climate of societal changes and complex criminal activities, the Progress Party is content that the police force of Norway managed to rise up to these occasions, and that today it is a well-equipped, well-trained and efficient internal security force.^[25]

In the aspect of the defense policy, the Progress Party is adamant in its stance that Norway must be able to deter any aggression on its territory, and that it must be able to meet the new and unforeseen threats, especially those linked to cyber-security and hybrid warfare. The Progress Party states the hybrid warfare is an especially credible threat to the nation's security, as it is a form of conflict that is "*seen more and more in our (Norwegian) neighborhoods*", thus the need for a new mandate and an increased dedication of resources to the intelligence services.^[26] The Progress Party additionally states that the Norwegian Armed Forces should have significant presence in Northern Norway and Northern Territories, as advanced weapon systems and increased military presence can produce an effect of deterrent. They also advocate for increased number of exercises in these regions. Besides this, the party also stands for maintaining of the state ownership over the Norwegian defense industry, procurement of modern weapon platforms for the armed forces, strengthening of the cyber defense, and limitation of the Norwegian participation in foreign missions.^[26]

For the region of Northern Territories, the Progress Party feels that sailing via the Northeast Passage and across the Arctic Ocean makes Norway the gateway for the entire European market. Thus, the party feels that the country needs to be able to handle all major disasters in the Norwegian area of responsibility, whether those may be Search and Rescue operations or assistance to ships and installations. The party also fully supports increased military presence and readiness in the area as a way to assert Norway's sovereignty, as well as opening new areas for the extraction of natural resources.^[27]

Considering Norway's participation in the NATO, the Progress Party fully supports the country's NATO membership, stating that Norway should be an active member and participate in joint training and exercises with forces from other the NATO member countries.^[28] They designate the NATO as the cornerstone of Norway's security and defense policy, especially since the NATO's increased attention towards the High North region. Thus, in the party's eyes, the NATO's goal of spending 2% of GDP on defense must be reached as soon as possible, preferably by 2024.^[28]

Additionally, Norway identifies the United States as the country's closest ally, and urges for further development of strategic partnership with the United States.^[28] The Progress Party also mentions the development of defense capacities in Norway's neighboring countries. Despite Sweden and Finland not being a part of the NATO, the Progress Party feels that Nordic countries share a common set of values, which makes defense cooperation a natural choice, either through the framework of the NATO Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) or outside it.^[28]

The Progress Party's foreign policy is foremost based on safeguarding of what it sees as the Norwegian interests. The party argues that this can be achieved through binding international cooperation aimed at the "*international decrease of tension, peace-building, global free trade and respect for the fundamental human rights*".^[28] They advocate for

Norway's reduction of trade barriers abroad, as well as a more limited participation of Norway in provision of emergency and disaster relief. The Progress Party stands for the alliance-building with like-minded countries, the right for the Jewish people in Israel to defend themselves from the external existential threats, and relocation of the Norwegian embassy in Israel from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem.^[29]

The question of Norway-EU relations is also important for the Progress Party. The party states in its program that it wishes for Norway's trade with the EU to be governed by the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement), but only after some parts of this agreement are renegotiated.^[30] The Progress Party sees the EEA Agreement as the Norwegian access to the EU's internal market, and thus of vital importance to Norwegian business and industry. Nevertheless, the party feels that Norwegian interests are not safeguarded enough, and thus the need for the renegotiation. Additionally, the party states that the external Schengen border is under intense pressure, and that several Schengen countries have little ability to control their own external borders. This in turn, puts Norway at risk as it exposes the country towards the uncontrolled flow of illegal immigrants. Thus, the Progress Party demands for this issue to be resolved, if the Schengen agreement is to be continued in its present form.^[30] Noting that the European Union is straying away from the original idea of promoting peace, freedom and trade in Europe, while aiming to increase the supranational bureaucracy in Brussels, the Progress Party strongly opposes Norwegian membership in the EU.^[30]

Given Norway's political context, there is no doubt that the Progress Party is viewed as a right-wing populist party. For example, Johan Bjerkem defines this party as such, given its anti-establishment and anti-immigration views, as well as its strict position on law and order.^[17] The Progress Party nevertheless managed to successfully rebrand itself into a more mainstream political option, thus becoming a feasible coalition partner for the the Liberal Party (Venstre - V) and the Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti - KrF).^[31] A term "moderate right-wing populist party" was also used in mass media, as the Progress Party toned down its messages and rhetoric, in order to become a part of governmental coalition.^[32]

Elisabeth Ivarsflaten, Anders Ravik Jupskas, Bente Kalsnes, and Toril Aalberg define the Progress Party as a populist party, in a sense that it presents themselves as the voice of the people, while simultaneously criticizing the elite for having betrayed the democratic principle of popular sovereignty.^[33, pp.3-4] They further note that the Progress Party is usually classified as a neoliberal populist party rather than a national populist one, even with xenophobia at the core of the party's ideology. Furthermore, they state that the Progress Party portrays itself as the sole defender of the common people, while criticizing the elites and excludes various groups from the national communities, such as asylum seekers, Roma and Muslims. They explain that the Progress Party's anti-immigration and xenophobic position is not based on the notion that immigrants are biologically inferior to native Norwegians, but rather that they present economic burden and/or cultural threat.^[33, pp.3-4]

Ivarsflaten, Jupskas, Kalsnes, and Aalberg further observed that since the party was originally founded as an anti-tax movement and not as a right-wing nationalistic option, it gave the party leadership a possibility to deflect most of the racism accusations. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the Progress Party in becoming the most important and influential anti-Islamic actor on the Norwegian political scene. They further noted that that

the Progress Party remained right-wing oriented in its economic policies, considering deregulation, taxation and privatization, but due to the country's significant income from the oil industry, they also argued that strong right-wing policies could be easily combined with stronger welfare policies, especially concerning the elderly population. [33, pp.3-4]

Anders Ravik Jupskås noted that the Progress Party, although not conceived as a right-wing populist movement based on nationalistic ideology, still has characteristics that resemble other contemporary right-wing parties. [34] He lists those characteristics as a strong anti-immigration message, better geriatric care, mobilization on law and order, policies favoring motorists and cultivating the image of the party for the ordinary people. [34]

Jupskås also observed the three party splits, in 1974, 1994 and in the early 2000s. First party split occurred one year after the party's foundation, when the future party's chairman Hagen defected with another prominent member from the ALP, in order to form ideologically similar Reform Party (Reformpartiet). Hagen returned to the ALP in the capacity of its parliament member after death of the ALP's founder Lange's, and he managed to successfully merge his Reform Party with the ALP. [34] The second split in 1994 occurred when the libertarian faction inside the Progress Party was internally defeated by the joined forces of nationalists and Christian-conservatives. [34] The final split of the party which occurred in the early 2000s was more related to the party's strategy than to the lines of ideology or organization. The party leadership was ready to present the Progress Party as a potential coalition member of the future governments, while the smaller faction inside the party wished for it to remain in opposition. After the wave of internal defections and a party purge, the party's membership increased in the following years, possibly due to the much more mainstream image that the party projected on the political scene. [34]

One of the interesting characteristics of this party is that it never had a right-wing militant past, as for example, did the Sweden Democrats, the Freedom Party of Austria, the National Rally (former National Front) in France etc. [17] Other characteristic that distance this party from its European counterparts is that the Progress Party can be considered more economically right-wing and less authoritarian than its sister parties in the Nordic region, but at the same time, it is keeping the anti-establishment and anti-immigration narrative. [17] Johan Bjerkem links this characteristic by noting that the Finns Party was a successor of the Finnish Agrarian Party, and heavily influenced by the agrarian populism and social-conservatism, while for example, Sweden Democrats were founded by merger of extreme and militant right organizations, such as Keep Sweden Swedish (*Bevara Sverige Svenskt*). [17] In comparison, Bjerkem notes that the Progress Party in Norway and the Progress Party in Denmark (which is predecessor of today's Danish People's Party) were both founded as a tax protest movements in the early 1970s, and on the basis of the neoliberal populism. [17] Thus, besides the Finns Party 2015-2017 membership in governmental coalition, the Norway's Progress Party is the currently the only Nordic party of such format that is both acceptable as a coalition partner for the other mainstream parties, and is also included in the coalition government. [17]

1.2. Election success of the Progress Party

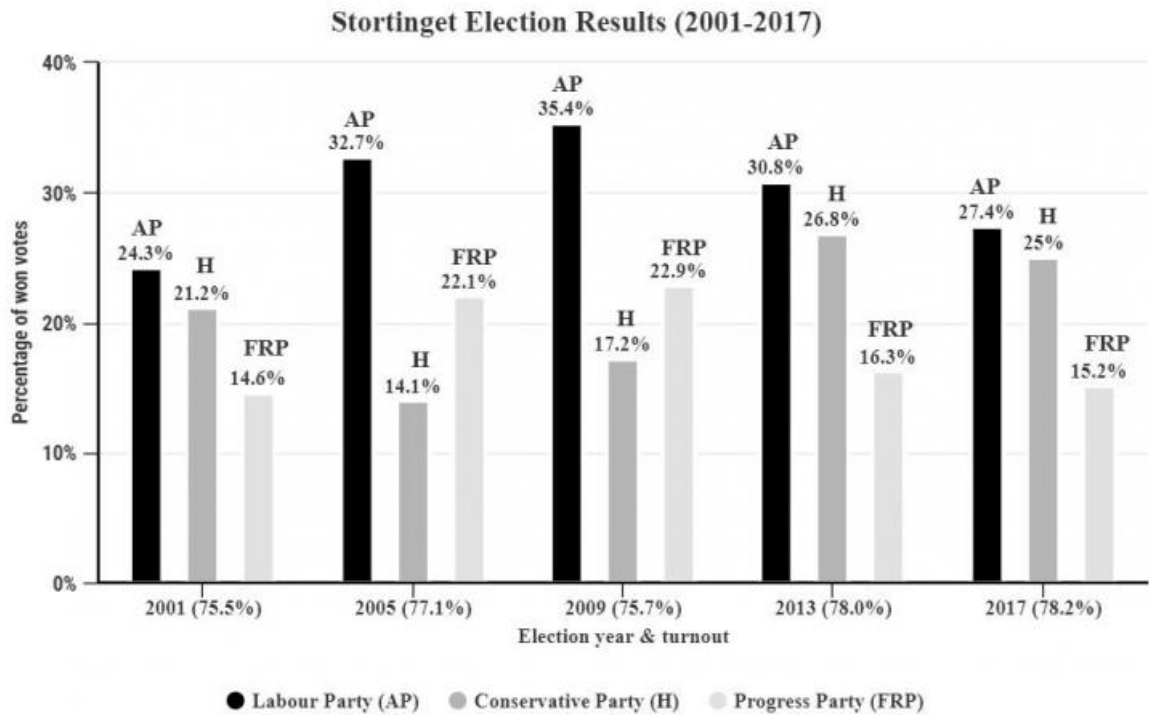


Figure 1: Norway parliament (Stortinget) election results (2001-2017). Source:[\[9\]](#)

In the context of traditionally high voting turnout for Norway, in 2001 and 2005 parliament elections, the Progress Party won 14.6% and 22.1% of votes respectively.[\[9\]](#) In 2013 parliament elections, the Progress Party experienced a slight increase in won votes, reaching 22.9%, and as future elections will show, marking this as the highest point of won votes on the parliament elections since the party's inception.[\[9\]](#) In 2013 parliament elections, the support for the Progress Party fell to 16.3%.[\[9\]](#) Nevertheless, after these elections, Conservative Party (Høyre – H) formed a minority cabinet coalition with the Progress Party, with the Liberal Party and Christian Democrats providing the confidence and supply in the Stortinget.[\[35\]](#) The Progress Party managed to evade steep decline in its support at the 2017 parliament elections, winning 15.2% of the votes. Conservative Party renewed the coalition with the Progress Party, with the addition of the Liberal Party, after some concessions were made over environment and oil exploitation.[\[5, p.85\]](#)

The 2017 parliament election showed that even with the lowering of support for the center-right coalition, the current alliance between the Progress Party and the Conservative Party was still strong enough to prevail against coalition of left-wing political opponents formed around the Labour Party.[\[36\]](#) The message that the Progress Party disseminated during the previous two election campaigns mainly concentrated around two topics: the negative role of immigration (i.e. "the immigrants are taking advantage of the system") and high taxes.[\[37\]](#) Once they became a part of the coalition government in 2013, the Progress Party supported the compromise made with the Conservative Party over tax reforms, which included cuts on corporate and wealth taxes, while also managing to obtain support for stricter governmental immigration policies. This proved as a success for the Progress Party leadership and the party voters, as the number of asylum applications fell from over 16,000 in 2015 to about 1,200 in late 2017.[\[38\]](#)

Nevertheless, the Progress Party experienced a decline in support among voters with other compromises that were made with the coalition partners, such as ruling out oil and gas

explorations off the coasts of Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja, maintaining strict alcohol policy and the granting of permanent residency to the children of illegal immigrants who have lived in Norway for more than three years.^[17] The concessions on gas and oil exploitation, as well as easing up on some immigration policies cost the Progress Party loss of support among voters, as those had been among party's main election promises for several years.^[17] This was to a degree compensated with the formation of a new ministry for immigration and integration, the adoption of stricter rules for granting of permanent residencies in Norway and the introduction of the stricter rules regarding the social benefits that refugees are eligible for.^[17]

In 2019, new changes in governmental coalition occurred, with the addition of the Christian Democrats in the coalition government, and by December 2019, the Progress Party had 7 out of 22 ministers in the coalition government. ^[39-40] In January 2020, the Progress Party left the governmental coalition over the decision to repatriate an Islamic State wife and her two children. The decision which the government made without support from the Progress Party was based on humanitarian grounds, citing that the children were seriously ill, and that they needed treatment in Norway. The woman has since been arrested on suspicion of being a member of both Al-Nusra Front (Al-Queda affiliate) and the Islamic State.^[41] The leader of the Progress Party, Siv Jensen, also resigned as a finance minister, while stating to the media that the other coalition partners forced the Progress Party to make too many compromises on tax cuts and immigration restriction.^[42]

The Progress Party deputy leader Sylvi Listhaug stated that other main points of the disagreement with the government were issues around exploitation of wind energy, power cables connecting Norway with grids abroad, as well as on how to define the limits of the Barents Sea ice.^[43] In Listhaug words, wind power pollutes Norway's nature, and the Progress Party is advocating for the right of local authorities to veto wind farm constructions. Additionally, the Progress Party is also against the government's plan to construct the North Connect power cable from Hardanger to the United Kingdom, as it would result in higher electricity costs. Finally, the Progress Party and the rest of the government were at a split on how to define the limits of the Barents Sea ice. The Progress Party advocated for placing the ice border further north in order to enable more oil exploration, while their coalition partners demanded for a border to be placed to the south, citing the need for protection of the region's environment.^[43]

Given that the next Stortinget elections are set to occur in 2021, the Progress Party might use the time outside government to assess the reasons for the drop in their support among voters, as well as to plan the effective strategy for the upcoming election campaign. Although the political situation in Norway is volatile enough to preclude any firm predictions, it is not unreasonable to say that the Progress Party can benefit in the future either from being inside the government or acting as opposition, as their anti-tax and anti-migration messages are still finding fertile grounds in the Norwegian public.

1.3. Progress Party and Russia

In their "*Principle and action program 2017-2021* ", Russia is mentioned only on a couple of occasions, with no developed foreign policy in the program dedicated solely to it. For example, in their Principle program, they state that Russia is increasingly re-militarizing and that is active in the Arctic region. Thus, Norway must secure its coastline, fishing resources and off-shore oil and gas deposits, while at the same time being capable of receiving

NATO's help (including troops) in case of any aggression.^[20, pp. 67-68] Additionally, in their publication on their official website titled "*Defense must be strengthened - concrete measures are needed now!*", the Progress Party leadership states that due to the increasing polarization between NATO and Russia, Norway should strengthen its armed forces. The party mentions that Russia has shown the willingness to use offensive military force in order to achieve its strategic objectives, in addition to the "*cross-border poisoning in early March against targets in the UK, Russia's UN veto against any solution in Syria, and Russian cyber-attacks targeting Western targets - including Norwegian ones*".^[44] Additionally, party was concerned with the simulation of attack against Norwegian and NATO targets during Russian air force exercises, thus repeating the need for the increased defense budget and more developed defense capabilities of Norway's Armed Forces.^[44]

Stanislav Byshok observed this mixed approach towards Russia by the Progress Party, mentioning that Carl I. Hagen, Christian Tybring-Gjedde and André Johnsen did make public statements that could be perceived as Russia-friendly ones, or got into the situations that were classified as compromising.^[45] For example, André Johnsen found himself in the center of a political scandal in 2015, in which he was suspected that he was in the contact with Russian intelligence agents posing as diplomats.^[45] Byshok additionally makes the observation that, although in general Scandinavian political leadership of the Eurosceptic parties (including the Progress Party) condemn the Russian intervention in Crimea (describing it as "annexation"), some of the members of Danish People's Party and the Progress Party also point out several factors that contributed to this situation other than Russia's ambitions to secure the peninsula for itself. Thus, Byshok concludes, there is no monolithic position towards Russia as several opinions can be heard inside the inner-circle of political leadership, thus making the party's position towards Russia a more neutral one than anti or pro-Russian.^[45]

This arguably neutral stance on Russia by the Progress Party was mentioned also in the Atlantic Council publication from the December 2018, titled "*The Kremlin's Trojan Horses 3.0*". The brief description of Norway's stance towards Russia, as made by the report, can be summarized by their conclusion that "*Oslo's policy towards Moscow is a balancing act between deterrence and reassurance: while supporting the overall policy of Norway's allies, political leaders emphasize the need to maintain dialogue and good relations with Moscow on matters where there is common ground*".^[46] The report of Atlantic Council also states that none of the nine parties that are currently represented in Norway's parliament can be characterized as pro-Russian per se. However, three political parties, including the Progress Party, made statements sympathetic to Kremlin, but without indications that they received direct Russian support, or that they managed to shift Norwegian policies regarding Russia. In the case of the Progress Party, the Atlantic Council report states that while its stance on Russia aligns with the Norwegian government policy, some of its lawmakers hold strong pro-Russian views, such as Christian Tybring-Gjedde and André Johnsen.^[46]

Some of the Norwegian mass media outlets also reported that these lawmakers made public pro-Russian statements. In March 2019, Norway's TV 2 news station ran a campaign to clarify the position of the Progressive Party towards Russia, after the interview the television conducted with Christian Tybring-Gjedde. In it, he expressed his view that Norway has to adjust its foreign policy to be more friendly and cooperative towards Russia, with possible removal of the economic sanctions against it. He added that the Progress Party perhaps needs to be more active in shaping the foreign policy.^[47] In response to this statement, the Conservative Party's foreign policy spokesman Michael Tetzschner rejected

the possibility that the government of Norway may change the approach towards Russia, stating that Russia is posing the single largest threat to its European neighbors, and that Norway should have only limited cooperation with it, where it suits its interests.^[47] Official stance of the Progress Party leadership after this event was that the Progress Party is fully aligned with the foreign policy of the government, which was agreed upon during the negotiations about formation of governmental coalition in January 2019.^[48]

This is not a first time that Christian Tybring-Gjedde came into the media spotlight, as in August 2017, he also advocated for removal of economic sanctions against Russia. Two years before that, he criticized NATO Secretary General for having an excessively strong language against Russia and President Vladimir Putin, adding that Russia is a crucial ally in fight against the ISIS and that NATO and Russia should create a united front against terrorists.^[49-50] Former Progress Party party leader Carl I. Hagen was also the cause of a controversy in the Norway's public, after giving an interview for Russian RT news station in December 2018.^[51]

In 2017, Bengt Rune Strifeldt, the Progress Party representative in Russia-bordering region of Finnmark, expressed his view that sanctions against Russia should be removed, stating that *"if we (Norway) are to use the potential which lies in our neighborly relations with Russia, we have to work for the abolishment of the sanctions, we have to try to solve the issues on a very different level than to introduce sanctions"*.^[52] Strifeldt also added that Norway had good cooperation with Russia *"for generations"* and that the Norway's northern neighbor is important market for goods and people, especially for the Norwegians living in Finnmark.^[52] Ketil Solvik-Olsen, the Progress Party member and Minister of Transport and Communications from 2013 to 2018, opened jointly with his then-Russian counterpart a new bridge between Norway and Russia in September 2017. During this event, Solvik-Olsen stated that such cross-border infrastructure was important for developing of cooperation between the two countries and that other joint projects were in consideration, such as a visa-free border crossing for residents of the border zone and interconnection of fiber optic cables across the border.^[53]

1.4 Context of Norway-Russia relations

Commercial exchange between Norway and Russia

In order for the influence of the Progress Party on the government policies towards Russia to be more precisely assessed, it is important to understand the context of the Norway-Russia relations. This can be achieved by reviewing some of the main points of Norwegian-Russian cooperation, such as commercial exchange between the two countries, as well as cooperation in the mutual zones of interests, i.e. Arctic and the Baltic regions.

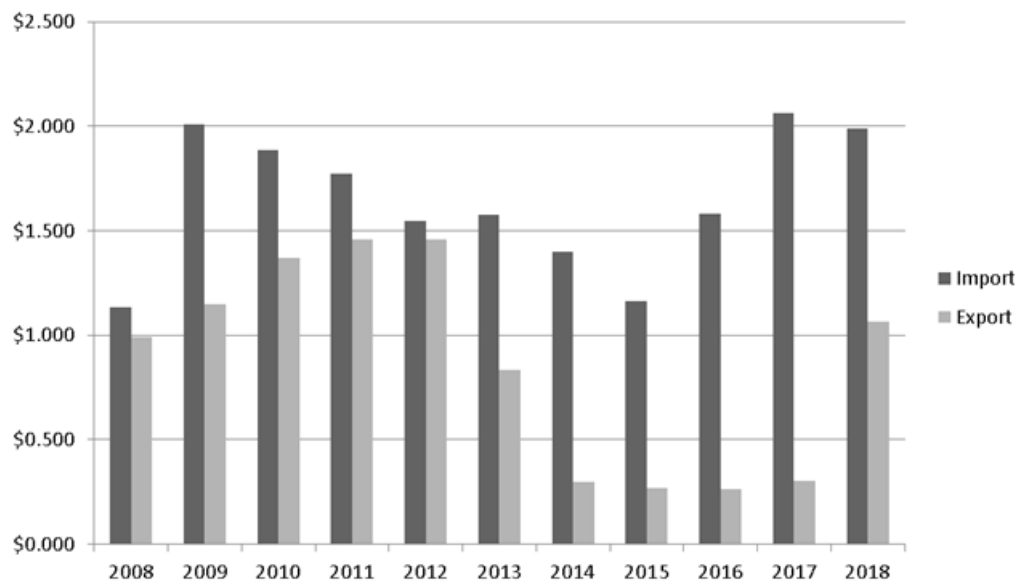


Figure 2: Norway-Russia import and export, in USD billion (2008-2018). Source: [\[54\]](#)

Looking at commercial exchange parameters, it can be concluded that the nature of Norway's imports from Russia is relatively stable over the years, and it includes crude and refined petroleum, metals, chemical and animal products, plastics and rubber among the most important ones. Of Norway's exports to Russia, the chief ones include sea vessels, metals, machines, mineral products, chemical products, food (mainly seafood) and animal products. [\[55\]](#) Imposing sanctions towards Russia in 2014 had an immediate effect on Norwegian exports, which fell to their lowest levels in the past decade and remained there until 2018. During the same time period imports from Russia suffered a comparatively smaller decline, but recovered already in 2016, and by 2017 were surpassing USD 2 billion. Norway showed interest in developing further economic exchange with Russia, as it was stated by the Norway's Trade and Industry Minister Torbjørn Røe Isaksen in 2018, who also noted that in the time of sanctions, it was important to develop ideas for cross-border trade and business developments between Norway and Russia. [\[56\]](#)

Roy Angelvik, member of the Progress Party and the current State Secretary for the Ministry of Industry and Fisheries, stated in January 2018 that there is a significant drop of export value of seafood exports, and that there is not enough focus within the government on the importance of Russian market for the Norwegian seafood industry. [\[57\]](#) That the seafood market issue is still relevant for the Norway-Russian relations shows the announcement made by the Rosselkhoznadzor (Russian body that oversees agriculture) in December 2019, in which demands were made towards the Eurasian Economic Union to ensure that Norwegian fish isn't delivered to Russia from other countries in the trading bloc from January 2020. [\[58\]](#) With Russia being the main market for salmon producers in Norway prior to the 2014 economic sanctions and counter-sanctions, this can prove as a further obstacle in normalizing the seafood trade between the two nations. [\[58\]](#)

Considering other sectors, 2019 saw some positive trends of Norway-Russia commercial exchange. They are especially visible on the example of civil aviation sectors of both countries. Norwegian, designated as one of Europe's largest low-cost carriers, engaged in active talks with Russia's Sukhoi Civil Aircraft Co, about prospects of leasing up to 40 of the Sukhoi's Superjet 100, in exchange for the rights to fly trans-Siberian services, which was considered by the Norwegian as the crucial direct route between its European and Asian bases for quite some time. [\[59\]](#) During the same year, for the first time dozens of companies

from Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Norway met in October in Moscow for the Smart Nordic Tech 2019 business event, where they discussed the development of the Arctic zone and the strengthening of business relations between Russia and the Nordic countries.^[60] At the same time, at the Norwegian city of Kirkenes during the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Finnmark, Finnmark County Councilor Ragnhild Vassvik (Labour party) stressed the need for lifting of the economic sanctions against Russia, for which she was criticized afterwards by some of her Labour Party colleagues.^[61]

Issues surrounding the Arctic region

There are fields of cooperation of both Norway and Russia where good relations between them is not only beneficial for both, such as organization, coordination and execution of emergency responses in the Arctic region. Large-scale maritime incidents and response operations in the Arctic region are not only highly complex operations that require highest level of cooperation between various national agencies, but they also demand for international cooperation, especially during the mass evacuation, Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) and Search and Rescue (SAR) scenarios.^[62, pp.10-12] It is important to note here that due to the lack of such incidents occurring in the Arctic region, the response agencies do not have much experience dealing with them. If by the some unfortunate circumstances a large-scale maritime incident occurs, for example a major oil spill, a mass rescue operation, a ship fire, a hazardous and noxious substance incident, a violent action or a combination of these, the successful containment and resolution of such crisis strongly depends on the international cooperation between Arctic states.^[62, pp.10-12]

The militarization of the Arctic region, which is underway by both Russia and NATO, can cause unforeseen consequences to nature, wildlife and human well-being if it is not handled responsibly and with open lines of communication between all of the actors. The government of Norway published its updated Arctic strategy in 2017, titled *"Norway's Arctic Strategy – between geopolitics and social development"*, where it is stated that the *"broad cooperation with Russia over the course of many decades has been important for building trust and promoting stability in the Arctic"*, and that the *"bilateral cooperation has also produced concrete results in areas of common interest...despite Russia's violations of international law in Ukraine and Norway's response to these, it is vital that Norway and Russia work together to address key challenges in the north"*.^[63, p.18]

Further in their Arctic strategy, the Norwegian government stated that it desires to have good neighborly relations with Russia, and that it gives the high priority to dialogue with Russian authorities. Further in this document, the Norwegian government stated that the NATO membership and the transatlantic security community are the cornerstones of Norway's security policy, especially given Russian military activity in the northern region during the past decade.^[63, p.18] Nevertheless, even though Norway government does not consider their country to be targeted by Russia's military activities, it emphasized the need for the Norwegian Armed Forces to be able to *"operate together with allied forces in the north"*.^[63, p.18] As a part of their policies, the Norwegian government pledges to continue projecting cooperation with Russia, as well as to continue providing support for people-to-people cooperation with Russia. Additionally, the government will promote Norwegian-Russian political dialogue and cooperation in areas of common interest, including *"fisheries management, the environment, search and rescue, nuclear safety, border control, and notification and response to incidents at sea, and maintain the direct line of contact between the head of the Norwegian Joint Headquarters and the head of the Northern Fleet"*

”.[\[63, p.21\]](#) Thus, it can be concluded that Norway aims to maintain a neighborly relationship with Russia, while at the same time it is ready to display its defense and sovereignty-enforcing capabilities along its northern border.[\[64, p.10\]](#)

Cooperation in the Barents Sea

Since 1967, Norway and Soviet Union were in negotiations over the resolution of the issue of the mutual maritime boundary in the Barents Sea. This was particularly important for Norway, given the need for establishing fishing and shrimping rights in the area. After four decades of on/off negotiations, in 2010 Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg signed an agreement in Murmansk on the mutual maritime boundary, thus resolving the only outstanding border issue that Norway had left as soon as the agreement came into power in 2011.[\[65, p.109\]](#) During the previous years, the government of Norway listed the positive examples of Norway-Russian cooperation, such as the Norwegian-Russian ship reporting system – “Barents SRS”, and the maritime surveillance and information system – Barents Watch, which help to provide an overview of high-risk traffic in northern waters and a more effective response in the event of accidents. The government of Norway also has plans to sign an agreement with Russia on seismic surveys up to and along the delimitation line, and to continue to develop cooperation on not only mutual exercises, but also notifications of incidents, preparedness and response. This level of cooperation was made possible mainly thanks to the bilateral agreement between Norway and Russia on oil spill preparedness and response in the Barents Sea and under the Arctic Council’s Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. The Norwegian government also stresses the great importance of the regular Norwegian-Russian search and rescue exercises that are carried out under the Barents cooperation.[\[63, p.37\]](#)

Effects of sanctions on Russo-Norwegian relations

Although it seemed that there were no major political misunderstandings between Norway and Russia, Norway imposed sanctions against Russia in the same manner as the EU, which caused some difficulties in the previously good Norway-Russian border cooperation. This followed with a mutual travel ban for a number of governmental officials and citizens of both countries, along with the major degradation of the defense cooperation between Norway and Russia.[\[66, pp.15-16\]](#) Additionally, Russia was placed back on the list of the external threats for the Norway’s national security, which in turn caused the steady increasing of the Norway’s defense budget since the 2016, as well as the revision of the official military doctrine.[\[67\]](#)

In the light of the previous Norway-Russia relations, or more precisely, pre-Ukraine period, this can be seen as a significant degradation of relations. Hans Mouritzen defines the Norway’s pre-Ukraine attitude towards Russia as “*stable, pragmatic and at times even benign*”, citing the example when Norway was against Membership Action Plans and NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia at the NATO Bucharest meeting in 2008, as well as the cautionary messages it sent months after Russian-Georgian conflict in the same year.[\[66, p.12\]](#) Mouritzen concludes that this was in line with the general policy of Norway towards Russia, and also, highly likely an attempt to create enough goodwill between the countries so the Barents Sea border agreement may finally be reached.[\[66, p.12\]](#) Hedda Langemyr, head of the Norway’s Forum for Foreign and Security Policy (UTSYN), lists several reasons why good relations between Norway and Russia are both necessary and achievable, citing

as examples visa-free zone between the border towns of Kirkenes and Nikel, significant Russian population in the city of Tromsø and 25 successful years of Barents cooperation program. At the same time, Langemyr notes that sanctions are hurting both countries in terms of the economy, cultural exchange, the security and bilateral relations between them on a general level.^[68] Additionally, a good dialogue and understanding with Norway is important for further Russian ambitions in the Arctic region, as Norway expressed its concerns for the potential negative environmental impact of the Northern Sea Route, a Russian development program worth \$11 billion.^[69]

It can be argued that any government of Norway, with or without the Progress Party in its coalition, will strive to maintain at least some degree of cooperation with Russia, as it is more beneficial and profitable for Norway than to fully adopt the policy of confrontation and isolation. The Progress Party can be then seen as a political option that in the best case will have a small positive role in the shaping of Norwegian-Russian relations, and in the worst case will be a party that is not anti-Russian by its nature and thus capable of hurting the established level of cooperation and hampering the potential for their improvement. Most significantly, the Progress Party has neither an established policy towards Russia, nor does it base its ideology and program on anti-Russian or pro-Russian sentiments per se. Therefore it is not hampered by sentiment when assessing the role of the Norway's eastern neighbor, which perfectly reflects the pragmatic nature of this party.

2. Denmark: Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti)

2.1. Danish People's Party origins, ideology and policies

Although the Danish People's Party was established in 1995, its predecessor can be traced back to the Danish "Progress Party" (*Fremskridtspartiet*). The Progress Party was established as an ultraliberal protest party in 1972 by the tax lawyer Mogens Glistrup. Already during the 1973 Danish parliament elections, it managed to win 15.9% of the votes, thus becoming the second largest party in Denmark overnight.^[70] Jørgen Goul Andersen described this party as neoliberal-populist, sometimes even ideologically bordering anarcho-liberalism, as its main issues were the abolition of all income taxes, as well as abandoning of public regulation and welfare of all sorts.^[71, p.2] Andersen observed that the Progress Party was populist in a sense that it was anti-elitist, while claiming that the will of the people reigns supreme over every other standard.^[71, p.2] The party also avoided using flammable nationalist rhetoric, opting instead for the humor and satire in getting attention to issues or for promotion of ideas. Although maintaining good election results for that kind of party during 1970s, its support fell during the next decade to less than 10%. This was caused by stronger campaigns of Denmark's Conservatives and Liberals, imprisonment of Glistrup in 1984 for tax fraud, and the party's internal strife between the leadership and party factions. In 1995, Pia Kjaersgaard, then leader of the Progress Party, broke off from the Progress Party along with three other party's MP's, and established the Danish People's Party.^[71, pp.3-4] The Progress Party survived until 2001, but after catastrophic election results that year, and increasingly extreme racist message the party's once again leader Glistrup was disseminating, it ceased to exist as a political actor.^[71, p.4]

Ideologically, Danish People's Party distanced itself from the ultra-liberal/protest-party form of the Progress Party, establishing itself rather as a right-wing party that wishes to be included in the mainstream politics of the country. By combining xenophobia and conservative nationalism with the defense of the Danish welfare state (especially concerning the elderly and sick), it managed to attract a significant number of disaffected

votes from both the right-wing and left-wing parties. Its strong anti-immigration policies, along with the dissemination of messages that target the over-bureaucracy, welfare cuts and loss of national sovereignty due to the EU integrations, won over voters mainly from the Denmark's' working-class, while expanding its support not only amongst the elderly population, but also middle-aged and younger.^[70] Additional measures that Danish People's Party undertook to reinforce its position as an attractive political option was to distance itself from the radical right-wing image to the much more moderate one, by removing several party leaders who had ties or background with the far-right organizations. The fruits of this tactics can be seen in cooperation with Social Democrats on the questions of welfare and immigration, where the two parties often support each other, as well as in the role of the Danish People's Party as a parliamentary supporter of minority governments.^[71]

The two political documents that are shedding more light on the Danish People's Party policies and values are its official political program, and additional manifesto titled "Principle Program" (*Principprogram*). While the political program lists the most pressing issues for the party, along with providing some propositions for their solution, the Principle Program explains more of the party's worldview and helps to understand the ideological foundation of the party.

The ideology of the DPP

According to the Danish People's Party Principle Program, the party views its purpose as the assertion of Denmark's independence, safeguarding of the freedom of the Danish people in their own country and preservation of the national rule and monarchy of Denmark. The party sees itself committed to the Danish cultural heritage, and to the strengthening of the country's internal and external security. The Danish People's Party is proponent of the constitutional monarchy in Denmark, increased direct democracy in the country and preservation of the union with the Greenland and Faroe Islands, as long as they wish to remain in the community with Denmark. The party also strongly feels that the state has to openly support the church, as their view is that the Christianity strongly influenced Denmark history and population throughout the centuries, and that it is an integral part of their national identity.^[72]

Further on in their Principle Program, the party proclaims that it supports "*friendly and dynamic cooperation with all democracies and freedom-loving nations in the world* ", as well as active Danish membership in the NATO and the UN.^[72] Additionally, the Danish People's Party expresses its concern for the lack of stricter punishment for committed crimes, and advocates for tougher measures against criminals. The party is also dedicated to the policy of preservation and strengthening of the Danish cultural heritage, as they consider this a prerequisite for the country's existence as a "*free and enlightened society* ".^[72] The Danish People's Party strongly rejects a "*multiethnic transformation of the country* " as "*Denmark is not an immigrant country, and never has been* ".^[72] The party believes that Denmark is the country of Danes, and thus, citizens should have all the conditions to live in a secure society that is developed in accordance with the Danish culture. In their view, foreigners, if they manage to obtain Danish citizenship, must fully integrate in the Danish culture and society, and must not pose a risk to security and government. The Danish social welfare system, education and healthcare are also at the center of the Danish People's Party attention, along with the traditional role of family in the society. Finally, the party states that it is also dedicated to the preservation of environment, as well as to the promotion of eco-friendly policies.^[72]

In contrast to the Principle Program, the political program of the Danish People's Party offers more concrete policies in dealing with various issues. Not surprisingly, Danish People's Party expresses hardline stance towards immigration, which can be summarized as "fewer (immigrants) IN (Denmark), more OUT".^[74] The party's view is that the Denmark has received plenty of foreigners over the years which failed to integrate into the Danish society, and that this lack of integration caused large unemployment rates among them, thus putting strain on the social welfare system. The party also believes that the lack of immigrant integration undermines values such as freedom, equality and democracy in Denmark. Thus, the Danish People's Party suggests that the solution for the decrease of migrants which do not integrate in the society is to return them to their home countries. It is proposed that this could be achieved if Denmark participated in relief and reconstruction efforts in the countries that are experiencing natural disasters, conflicts or other misfortunes.^[73] Danish People's Party also gives considerable attention to the issues such as care for the elderly, social policy, health policy as well as animal welfare policy, ranking them high on their political agenda list.^[74-77]

Further on in their political program, the party is also advocating for a stricter security policies, including increased size of police force and police patrols in the country, stricter punishments for crimes and longer jail times, with them being "more as a punishment and less as a college"^[78]. Additionally, the Danish People's Party strongly supports much stricter border control and the re-introduction of police and custom control at all of Denmark's border-crossings, on land, sea, and airports.^[79] Considering the EU, the Danish People's Party is strongly against further federalization, proclaiming that their goal is "More Denmark – less EU!".^[80] The party is not against the cooperation with the EU per se, but in their view, it must be a more limited one, focused on the areas such as trade, environment policy and technical cooperation, as they fully oppose the establishment of a European political union whose purpose is to erase national states. The party is adamant in its stance that Denmark must be a sovereign nation and that no law or decision must be set higher than the Constitution of Denmark. They support the UK's negotiations with the EU over "Brexit" as a much needed encouragement for the European Union to change itself into the more acceptable format of cooperation for the Europe's nation states.^[80] Interestingly, Jørgen Grønnegaard Christensen notes that, although the Danish People's Party is highly skeptical towards the EU, it usually didn't go against the proposed pro-EU policies of the government when their support was needed in the parliament.^[81]

Position of the DPP on the political spectrum

Scholars agree that the Danish People's Party can be described as a right-wing populist one, although some make differences between party's ideological and economic program. Karina Kosiara-Pedersen identifies two dimensions of Danish political parties, the economic dimension, based on the attitude towards taxation, social welfare and public sector, and "value politics", based on the attitude towards immigration, environmental concerns and law and order. The Danish People's Party, considering its stance on the economy, cannot be considered right-wing, as for example, during its 2015-2019 government support, it provided parliamentary majority for the Liberal-led government which opposed the tax cuts and more center-placed economic programs. The right-wing nature of the Danish People's Party is seen in the sphere of "value politics", and the party's strict stances towards the immigration, islamisation and harsher sentences for crimes.^[82]

Birte Siim and Susi Meret observe that the Danish People's Party based its ideology and

positions on exclusionary ideas of the nation and its native people, seeing a threat for Denmark from both outside (immigration and European integration) and inside (Islam).^[83, p.110] In their opinion, this approach to nation state can be linked to the particular type of “welfare nationalism”, which links national issues with the democracy, gender rights and social equality issues, in the construction of identity and the sense of the national belonging.^[83, p.110]

2.2. Election success of the Danish People’s Party

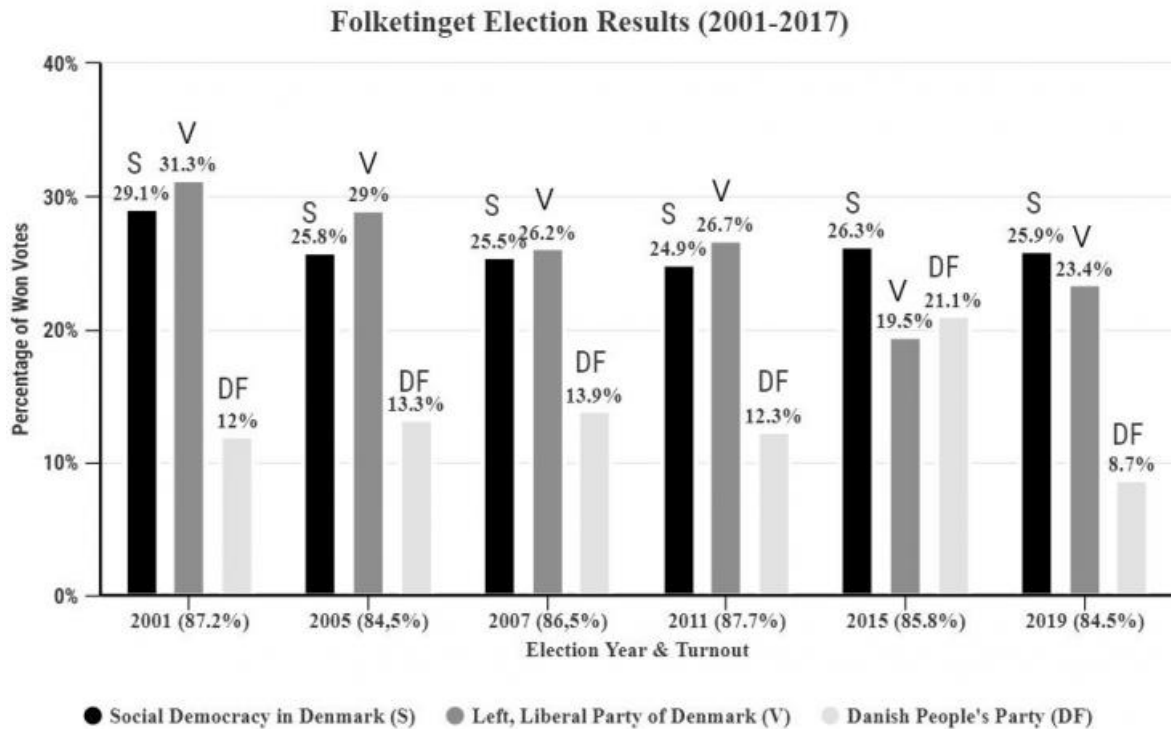


Figure 3: Denmark parliament (Folketinget) election results (2001-2017). Source: ^[84]

Considering the election success of the Danish People’s Party for the Folketinget (Danish parliament) during the last two decades, the party enjoyed stable 12% to 14% of won votes from 2001 to 2011.^[84] During the 2015, the party experienced sharp increase in its support, reaching 21.1% of won votes.^[84] Inger V. Johansen attributes this success in the elections to the Danish People’s Party adaptability, careful control of tactics and strategy, avoidance of voter alienation by not getting close to the extremist positions in its messages and ideology, rejection of ultra-liberalism and promotion of a social agenda. Johansen observes that the Danish People’s Party managed to reach many of its goals that shares with the other right-wing parties in Europe, such as the influence over the national immigration policies, as well as promotion of xenophobic political climate, skepticism towards the EU and nationalism.^[70, p.47]

Given the Danish People’s Party good performance on the 2001 parliament elections, it was in position to provide support for the formation of the Liberal-Conservative government. Jørgen Goul Andersen observes that the Danish People’s Party functioned as the government’s parliamentary support in almost all major reforms, especially those concerning the stricter regulation for the immigrants. Additionally, the image of pro-welfare party was obtained when the Danish People’s Party managed to secure concessions on the welfare issues from the Liberal-Conservative government, mainly on behalf of the senior citizens.^[71, p.4] Ann-Cathrine Jungar sees this position of the Danish People’s Party as the

most optimal one for the leadership of this party, as it enables them to influence governmental policies without assuming full responsibilities for them.[\[85, pp.3-4\]](#) The party also gave parliamentary support to governments from 2015 to 2019.[\[86, p.48\]](#)

Jungar observes that after the 2015 parliament elections, the Danish People's Party leader Kristian Thulesen Dahl still had more preference for policy influencing than for ministerial position, thus deciding to keep away party from the participation in the coalition government. The problem was that majority of the party members were in favor of government participation, especially if it meant forming up coalition with Social Democrats, who themselves shared mutual feelings with the Danish People's Party. As stated by the Jungar, for a party that campaigned on the strong anti-immigration and anti-EU platforms, to be able to be recognized as a desired coalition member for a both left and right, is truly a pioneering achievement in Scandinavian politics.[\[85, pp.3-4\]](#)

During the last Folketinget elections, the Danish People's Party support dropped significantly, as they managed to secure only 8.7% of votes. Kosiara-Pedersen explains the significant drop of the voters support at the elections as the combination of several negative moments, such as accusation for the misusing the EU funds, not entering the Rasmussen's coalition government in late 2016 and with the formation of two new right-wing parties, The New Right (*Nye Borgerlige*) and the Hard Line (*Stram Kurs*) who took some voters away from the Danish People's Party.[\[82, pp.1-2\]](#) Although it is not participating directly in the government, the Danish People's party still has a degree of influence on government policies, especially those regarding the immigration and integration. They successfully impacted policies on burqa ban, cuts on integration measures and user charge on translation, as well as policies on economic issues, such as taxes.[\[82, pp.2-3\]](#)

Danish People's Party is also member of the Nordic Council, which along the Nordic Council of Ministers represent the main forums for the official Nordic co-operation, consisting of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. While the Nordic Council of Ministers is the forum for inter-governmental co-operation, the Nordic Council is dedicated to the inter-parliamentary co-operation.[\[87\]](#) Danish People's Party, along with the True Finns and Sweden Democrats, established a social-conservative political group "Nordic Freedom" within the Nordic Council in 2012. At the moment, Danish People's Party is not on good terms with the Norwegian Progress Party due to their differences in the ideology. Since the Norwegian Progress Party is more neoliberal than right-wing, it distanced itself from the more nationalistic context of Danish People's Party, Sweden Democrats and the Finns Party.[\[70, pp.46-47\]](#)

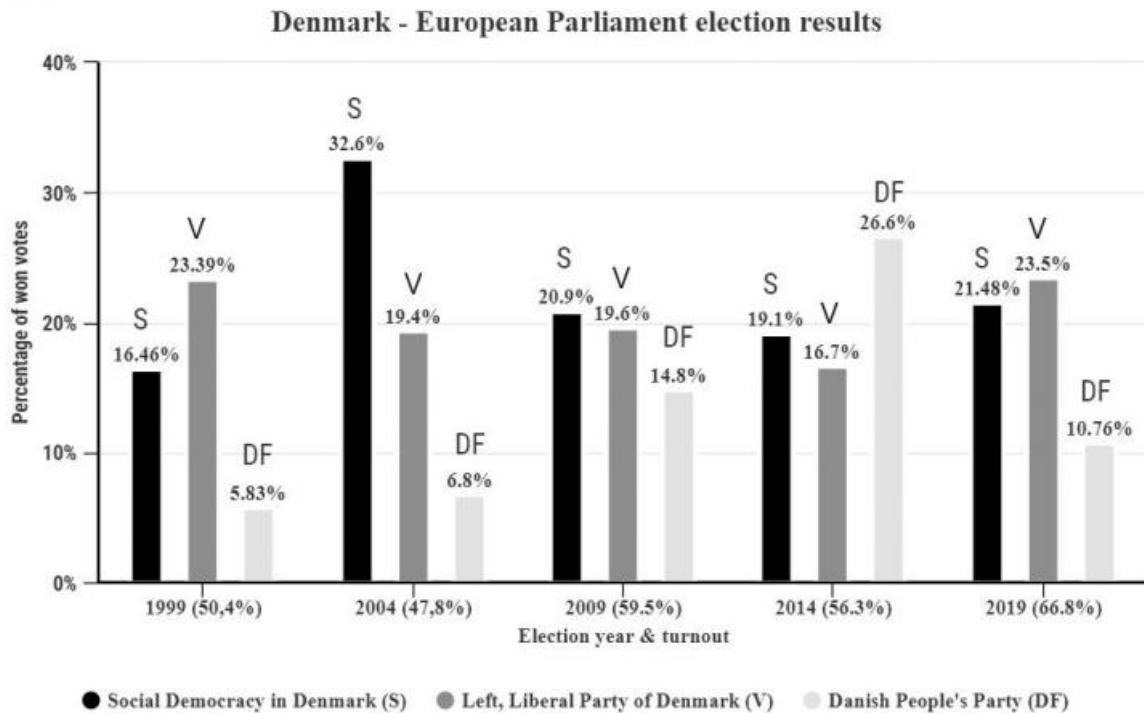


Figure 4: European Parliament elections results for Denmark (1999-2019). Source: [\[88-92\]](#)

Considering Danish People's Party success on the European Parliament elections in 1999 and 2004, the party won 5.8% and 6.8% respectively, along with a single seat in the EU Parliament. [\[88-89\]](#), The party experienced a rise in the support among the voters in 2009 and 2014, winning 16.7% (3 seats) and 26.6% (4 seats) respectively. [\[90-91\]](#), As was the case with the 2019 Folketinget elections, the Danish People's Party experienced a sharp drop in the support during the 2019 European Parliament elections, winning only 10.7% of the votes, and a loss of 3 seats in the EU Parliament as a consequence. [\[92\]](#) In April 2019, the Danish People's Party left the European Conservatives and Reformist group and joined the Northern League, Alternative for Germany and the Finns Party to form a new block, which will be later known as Identity and Democracy. [\[93\]](#)

2.3. Danish People's Party and Russia

In their official program, the Danish People's Party does not mention Russia or policy towards Russia in any capacity, making their official stance towards that country hard to determine. Nevertheless, some voices inside the Danish People's Party did express more positive view towards Russia than their political counterparts, such as for example Marie Krarup, a Danish People's Party MP and the party's former defense policy spokesman. In 2016, in an interview which was published by the Danish business and political magazine Ugebrevet Mandag Morgen, Krarup stated that although Danish People's Party sees Russia's president Putin as the proponent of the "autocratic, non-democratic system that we do not want in Denmark", Danish people nevertheless have similar interests with Russia in the long run, and therefore all the reason necessary to have an opportunity for cooperation. [\[94\]](#)

This corresponds with her previous comments which were made same year for the Danish national public radio broadcaster DR Byen, which stated that Denmark is pursuing a wrong policy towards Russia with the sanctions, since Russia does not have an "aggressive expansionary ideology like the Soviet Union had". [\[95\]](#) Additionally, she stated that although Denmark has to have a strong defense in order to show that the country can look after

itself, the government should have open line of communications with Russia, as there are lot of common interests and challenges between the two countries, such as terrorism, radical Islam, immigration and destabilization of the "southern front".^[95] Krarup's comments were criticized by the other Denmark's parties, such as Venstre and Social Democrats. Krarup herself was fired from the role of the party's spokesman in 2018, and replaced with Jeppe Jakobsen, who sees Russia and the potential Sino-Russian alliance as a real and present threat to Denmark and Europe.^[96] The criticism towards Russia from the members of the Danish People's Party could also be heard in April 2019, when the Danish People's Party Member of the Parliament, Anders Vistisen, stated that the "*Russian aggression*" is concerning, and that "*a wounded bear (Russia) is dangerous*".^[97]

In 2017, the Danish People's Party Foreign Spokesman Søren Espersen, stated that the party will support in the parliament any government decision on Russian gas pipeline Nord Stream 2, as long as that decision comes from the Denmark's interests, and not Brussels.^[98]

Pia Kjærsgaard, co-founder of the Danish People's Party and its leader from 1995 to 2012, criticized publicly Russia in February 2019, due to the case of the imprisonment in Russia of the Danish member of Jehovah's Witnesses over extremism charges.^[99]

In May 2019, Morten Helveg Petersen, member of the Danish Social Liberal Party, accused the Danish People's Party that they are seeking a closer relationship with Russia and the Russian president Vladimir Putin, by forming an alliance with other right-wing parties in Europe, such as Alternative for Germany, Italian League and National Rally.^[100] Some experts believe that the Danish People's Party's participation in such an alliance does not necessarily mean support for Denmark's closer cooperation with Russia as such, as the Danish People's Party is fully in favor of Denmark's NATO membership as the cornerstone of national security policy.^[101]

2.4. Context of Danish-Russia relations

Commercial exchange between Denmark and Russia

As it was case with Norway, Denmark has also mutually beneficial points of cooperation with Russia. Besides commercial exchange between the two countries, the cooperation is seen in the Arctic region, energy security (the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project), as well as in the Baltic Sea.

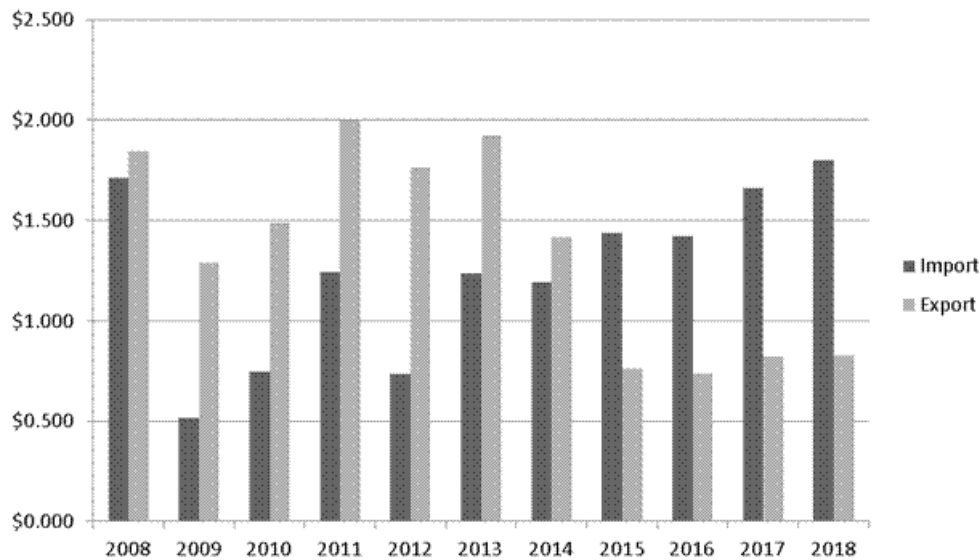


Figure 5 – Denmark's import and export from/to Russia, in billions of US dollars 2008-2018.

Source: [54]

Denmark's import from Russia after 2008 (amounting to USD 1.7 billion) experienced a period of stagnation from 2009 to 2013 (ranging from USD 0.7 billion to USD 1.2 billion), when it became stabilized at around USD 1.2 – 1.4 billion for the period of 2013-2014. From 2017 onwards, imports were on the rise again, and in 2018, their total amount surpassed USD 1.8 billion, which is an increase of USD 0.1 billion worth of goods compared to the 2008. [54] The import from Russia for the most part comprise mineral fuels, iron and steel, wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal, fertilizers and agricultural products. [102] Denmark's export to Russia mainly consists of fish and fish products, machines, medication, chemical and animal products, and pre-2014 economic sanctions and counter-sanctions, of cheese and dairy products. [102] From 2008 to 2014, Danish exports oscillated in value between USD 2 billion and USD 1.2 billion. As of 2015 to 2018, the value of Danish export to Russia was at a relatively stable levels, ranging from USD 0.76 billion to USD 0.82 billion. [54]

In October 2019, Denmark gave its approval for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, thus ending the last major obstacle for the project. This project caused a division inside the EU, as the United States, as well as several Eastern European, Nordic and Baltic countries were strongly against this pipeline, due to the perception of these countries that Nord Stream 2 increases Russia's influence over regional energy supply, thus threatening the security of the EU Member States. [103] Poland was especially concerned that Gazprom will export the gas directly to Germany, bypassing Poland and Ukraine, thus costing these countries billions in lost transit fees every year. [104] Germany, which plans to shut down its nuclear power plants by 2022 and its coal power plants by 2038, is naturally very concerned that the pipeline is successfully established and put to operation, and its voice carried considerable strength inside the EU for the project to proceed as planned. [104] The approval for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline came from Danish Energy Agency (*Energistyrelsen*), which is the agency of the Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Building, whose incumbent minister is Dan Jørgensen of the Social Democrats Party. Nevertheless, some political parties that support the government, such as Radical Left, called this permission an "inevitable but unhappy decision". [105]

Arctic cooperation and open issues

Furthermore, in October 2019 Copenhagen hosted a roundtable focusing on the relations between Russia and the EU in the Baltic Sea and Arctic, which was organized by the Danish Foreign Policy Society. The participants included former diplomats and experts from Denmark, Norway and Russia.^[106] This is not surprising considering that Denmark and Russia have strong mutual interests for cooperation in Arctic, mainly considering shipping industry. In 2013, Danish Maritime Authority held a seminar on Arctic shipping together with Russian Ministry of Transport in Saint Petersburg. A wide range of subjects in relation to the increasing ship traffic in the Arctic regions were debated, and knowledge was exchanged on the topics of safety of navigation, regulation, commercial possibilities and administrative reductions among others.^[107] In June 2019, Danish-based Maersk, the world's largest container-ship and supply vessel operator, announced that that is exploring the possibility of sending cargo along Russia's Northern Sea Route, while also conducting negotiations with Russian primary operator of nuclear-powered icebreakers, Rosatomflot.^[108] Already in August 2019, Maersk launched Asia-Europe Transit Service via Russian territory waters, which significantly shortened time of goods transit from the EU to the Asian countries such as Republic of Korea, Japan and the rest of Southeast Asia.^[109]

Another example of Denmark and Russian cooperation and platform for dialogue is the Intergovernmental Russian-Danish Economic Cooperation Council. This council, established in 1992, held 11 sessions by 2018. In 2018, during the 11th session, the Danish delegation was led by Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs Anders Samuelsen, while Russian delegation was headed by Minister of Transport Maxim Sokolov. Both sides stated that they led constructive discussion on a wide range of issues concerning bilateral cooperation, such as transport, agribusiness, the energy sector, energy efficiency, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals. Additionally, the role of Danish companies and their projects in Russian Ulyanovsk Region and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Russian and Danish Ministries of Health were the major part of this event.^[110] The next meeting of the Intergovernmental Russian-Danish Economic Cooperation Council is planned to be held at the Copenhagen in 2020.^[111]

Denmark and Russia maintained peaceful and stable cooperation in the Arctic, even with the rise of the geopolitical tensions post-2014.^[112, P.20] Nevertheless, Denmark undertook steps in order to increase its security and force projection in the region, such as the establishment of the joint Arctic Command in Greenland, procurement of two patrol vessels and four frigates that can operate in the frozen waters of the Arctic year-round, as well as organizing military exercises and deepening of cooperation with other Nordic countries.^[112, p.71] Lassi Heininen, Alexander Sergunin and Gleb Yarovoy believe that Denmark's current strategy for the Arctic region does not allow large maneuvering space for cooperation with Russia, given that Denmark laid the claim for parts of the Arctic shelf, by trying to prove that parts of the Lomonosov Ridge are extension of the Greenland Plate. Nevertheless, they note that there are some areas where Denmark and Russia cooperate, such as for example, strengthening of the navigation safety in the Arctic waters.^[113, p.40]

This in particular was also underlined in the document titled "*Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020* ", where the government of Denmark stated that it wants to further expand and develop cooperation with Russia in the region, as there is a "*great mutual interest in closer cooperation on strengthening the safety of navigation in Arctic waters* ".^[114, p.54] Additionally, the government of Denmark believes that enhanced cooperation with Russia may include scientific collaboration on the continental shelf, as well

as an exchange of findings on economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development in the Arctic. The most interesting point in this strategy includes the government of Denmark openness for initiating confidence building between Denmark and Russia, as well as studies on *"potential cooperation between the Danish and Russian defense, particularly in the maritime area"*.^[114, p.54]

As seen from the examples above, Denmark and Russia have by nature much common ground where they can develop dialogue and cooperation, as well as mutually beneficial relations. Although there are some unresolved issues in relations, mostly connected to the NATO and militarization of the Arctic, it is highly likely that both countries will strive to show goodwill to each other were it is possible. Danish People's Party, although not perceived as an ally or advocate of Russia, is certainly not antagonizing it. It is also important to note that the Danish People's Party does not have any concrete designated foreign policy towards Russia, nor has it expressed official stance towards it – hence the lack of interest or need to influence the governmental policies towards Russia. Thus, it seems that the future of good Danish-Russian relations is not dependent on whether or not this political party will be in any capacity a member of governmental coalition.

Conclusion

Following conclusions can be made, based on the assessment of the both Progress Party and Danish People's Party political program, leadership statements in the media, as well as general context of the Norwegian-Russian relations and the Danish-Russian relations:

- 1) Neither the Progress Party nor Danish People's Party can be characterized as the "pro-Russian" parties, nor that they are in any sense harboring inside their political program "pro-Russian" sentiment, or advocating for it. Individual pro-Russian statements made by the parties officials are not considered as the official stances of the examined parties;
- 2) Additionally, neither the Progress Party nor the Danish People's Party can be labeled as "Russophobic" or "anti-Russian" ones, as there is lack of systematic dissemination of anti-Russian and/or Rusophobic messages in the mass media and such kind of policies in their political documents;
- 3) The lack of significant pro or anti-Russian sentiment in these parties derives from the lack of their interest for Russia, as it is not existential threat to their countries or people. These parties are focused on the domestic issues, such as immigration, crime, taxation etc., while their foreign policy is more dedicated towards the questions of EU integrations and participation in NATO;
- 4) It follows that it can be safely assumed that both parties have neutral/pragmatic stance towards Russia, given how their respective countries can benefit (and already have) from cooperation with the Russian Federation in the areas of mutual interests;
- 5) Final conclusion states that both parties have extremely limited or practically zero influence on their respective governments for the state policies towards the Russian Federation, as they lack political will or actual interest to do so either way.

Taking into the account above mentioned statements, it can be concluded that although not being pro-Russian in nature, these parties are also not anti-Russian per se, thus their presence in the government is not hurting neither Norwegian-Russian nor Danish-Russian relations. At the same time, they are also not taking any active steps to improve them, or develop this topic further in their political programs. And while they demonstrated a lack of political interest for influencing the policies towards Russia by their respective countries, the mere presence of the neutral and pragmatic political options can be considered as a

positive factor in maintaining the current levels of cooperation between Norway, Denmark and Russia.

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