

## MODES OF GOVERNANCE IN THE EU

**Summary:** This article will focus on the processes of centralization and decentralization of governance in the European Union between 2010 and 2015. The current framework of the EU is enabling the co-existence of two different modes of governance – the EU as a federation and the EU as a Union of independent states, one of which is always dominating over the other. The article will present the preliminary results of a study (content analysis) about the position of political figures from six EU member states countries on three topics during the selected period. Most of these political figures have been part of the institutions of the EU and in regards to the three mentioned topics have supported and are still supporting measures, which influence the choice of the dominating mode of governance.

**Key words:** European Union; governance; modes; system; macro-model

The European Union is a political and economic partnership between 28 countries, which have given up their national sovereignty in several policy areas. This is probably the best example for successful regional integration worldwide. However, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe witnessed an unsuccessful attempt for the adoption of an European constitution, a serious confrontation between the EU member states in regards to the war in Iraq, an unsuccessful referendum in Ireland about the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, and in the last half decade, as a result of many problems the EU had to encounter, there is a visible rise of nationalism and euroscepticism. The 2014 European parliament elections even led to a record number of eurosceptic MEP's. These developments raise the question about the future of the European integration process. Should the EU strive towards more centralization or should it focus on the cooperation between independent countries, which was actually the initial idea of the European project? The object of study in this article will be the governance in the EU. The subject of study will be the existing modes of governance in the EU and the shift from one mode of governance to another.

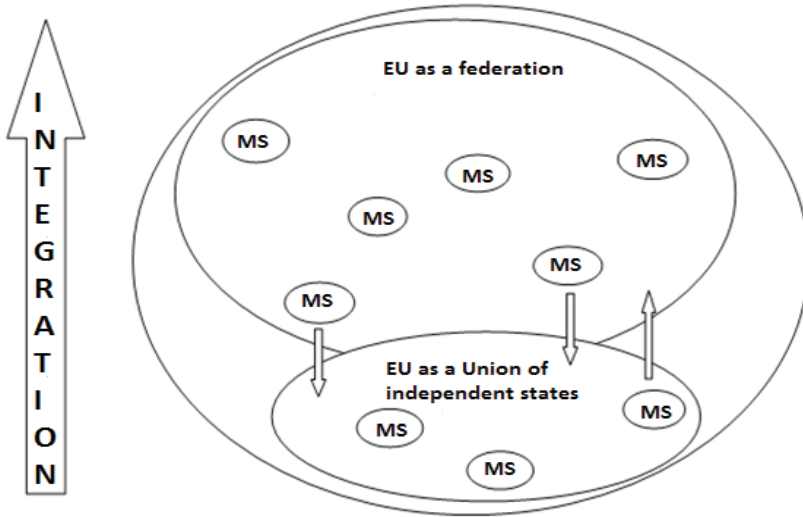
Governance is a term, used in Macrosociology. It is one of the main components of the macro-sociological concept of society as a system of prof. Stoyan Michailov (1982). According to this concept every society can be understood as a system, which consists of five activities (subsystems) – material production, spiritual production, transport and communications, reproduction and governance. On the one hand these activities are means, because they produce specific goods. On the other hand these

activities are needs in terms of the functioning of the other subsystems and society as a whole. The subsystems have their own subsystems and are related to each other, because change in every one of them leads to change in the other four. That is why it cannot be argued that one of the subsystems has superiority over the others. Every change is caused by the need for self-development, which is actually the sixth component of the system (Mirchev, 2011).

In Political Science the term “governance” is closely related to the term “politics”. Even though there are dozens definitions of politics the traditional view is that politics is the art of governance of the state (Yankov, 2011: 12). Politics is defined by the term governance and from a systemic point of view it has three dimensions. The first one is polity (form), which includes the institutions and the normative base. The second one is politics (process), which describes the decision-making process. And the third one is policy (content), which are actually the adopted policies. If we accept that “politics” and “governance” are synonyms and integrate this understanding in the macro-sociological concept of society as a system, we can conclude that polity, politics and policy are subsystems of the subsystem of governance.

In Sociology integration is defined as a process of the creation of systems of a higher rank, which includes the rapprochement between the components of the system and the decrease of their sovereignty (Mirchev, 2011: 84). From this point of view the European integration process leads to the formation of the system of the EU and that is why the macro-sociological concept of society as a system is applicable to the EU. However, the subsystems of the European system are not fully developed yet, since there is division of competencies between the EU and the member state countries, the existing principle of subsidiarity etc. The European institutions, the European decision-making process and the European policies are quite visible and for this reason it is more appropriate to speak not about subsystem of governance, but about modes of governance in the EU. There are two modes of governance – a centralized mode of the EU as a federation and a decentralized mode of the EU as a Union of independent states. These modes are not something new. They exist since the creation of the European communities over 60 years ago. Every mode of governance has its own supporters and the German sociologist Ulrich Beck writes about a long-lasting conflict between the architects of Europe and the orthodox defenders of the nation state (Beck, 2012: 81-88). In the different phases of the European integration process one of the two modes has always dominated over the other.

Figure 1: Modes of governance in the EU



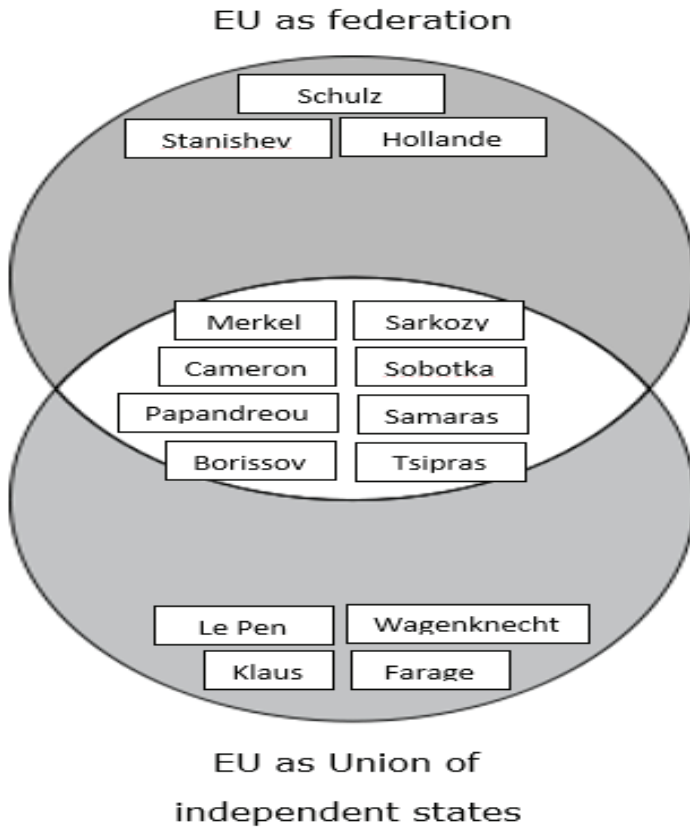
This article includes the results of a study (content analysis) of speeches, commentaries and interviews of leading political figures from six EU member state countries (Bulgaria - Sergei Stanishev and Boyko Borissov; Greece - Georgios Papandreou, Antonis Samaras and Alexis Tsipras; Czech Republic - Vaclav Klaus and Bohuslav Sobotka; Germany - Angela Merkel, Martin Schulz and Sahra Wagenknecht; France - Nicolas Sarkozy, Francois Hollande and Marin Le Pen; Great Britain - David Cameron and Nigel Farage) on three problematic for the EU topics (the economic and debt crisis in the EU; the migration in the EU; the energy policy in the EU). The database includes articles from the personal websites of the selected political figures, from the websites of their political parties, from the websites of national and European institutions (e.g. government, parliament, European parliament etc.), as well as articles from the national press in the period 2010-2015. The main criteria for the selection of the political figures are three: 1. there should be at least two political figures from each member state country; 2. they should have different party affiliation; and 3. these political figures should have access to the European institution and the European decision-making process.

A future expansion of the database in terms of timeframe (2007-2015), member state countries (Hungary, Spain and Italy) and political figures (Victor Orban, Jose Luis Zapatero, Mariano Rajoy, Silvio Berlusconi, Matteo Renzi) is intended. The second phase of the study will consist of interviews with Bulgarian experts about the main trends in the development of the EU.

The arguments of the selected political figures in favor of more centralization or more decentralization of governance in the EU are presented in the table below. They are ordered according to the three dimensions of politics for the periods 2010-2011 and 2014-2015:

|          | Centralization  |   | Decentralization  |   |
|----------|---|---|---|---|
|          | 2010-2011   | 2014-2015   | 2010-2011   | 2014-2015   |
| Polity   | development of an European credit rating agency; European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism; European Stability Mechanism; European Fiscal Compact              | European Energy Union; European Banking Union; European Political Union (European state); intensification of the role of Frontex                                      | member states must be allowed to leave the Eurozone; Euro-Plus Pact   | dissolution of Schengen area; dissolution of the Eurozone; EU must return half of its competencies to the member states |
| Politics | community method instead of intergovernmental coordination  | community method instead of intergovernmental coordination; democratic accountability of the decisions of the Troika; controlling function of the European parliament | intergovernmental coordination instead of dictate from Brussels; national referendums   | intergovernmental coordination instead of dictate from Brussels; national referendums                                   |
| Policy   | introduction of Eurobonds and European financial transaction tax; common European migration and asylum policy; development of the common European energy market | common European migration and asylum policy   | the member states must control their own borders; opposition against a common monetary policy, because of the incompatibility of the economies of the member states | the member states must control their own borders  |

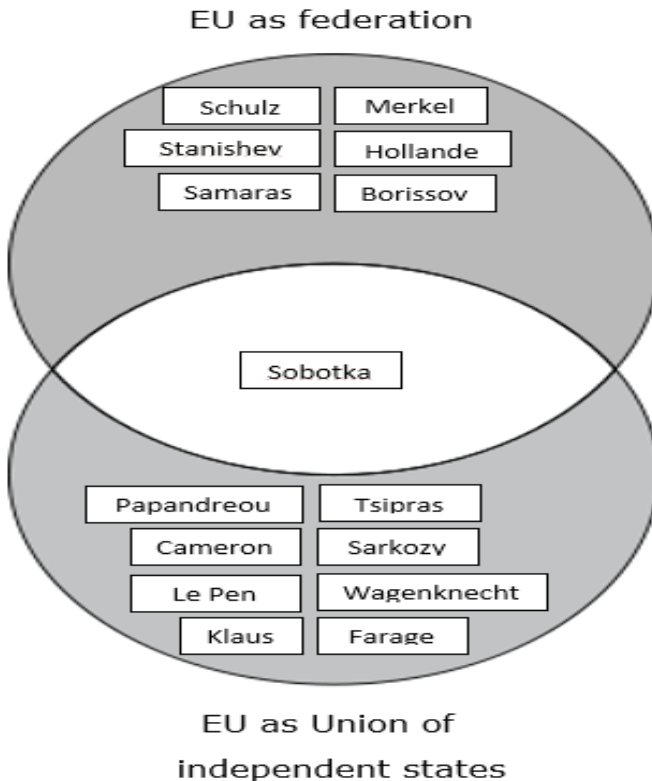
2010-2011 the majority of the political figures are in favor of keeping the status quo (e.g. more integration in one policy area and no integration in another policy area). That is why they are positioned in the center of Figure 2, which is actually the area where the two modes of governance in the EU overlap:



**Figure 2: Centralization and decentralization of governance in the EU (2010-2011)**

There are two reasons for this. The first one is the choice of policy areas in which the EU has different competencies. The EU has exclusive competence in the monetary policy area for the member states of the Eurozone. The energy policy is an area of shared competence between the EU and the member states. Migration policy on the other hand is an area where the EU has competence to support, coordinate or supplement actions of the member states. The second reason is specifically related to the economic and debt crisis in the EU. 2010-2011 was the period when the crisis reached its peak and most of the European measures against it (e.g. European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism; European Stability Mechanism; European Fiscal Compact etc.) were taken. However, despite the exclusive competence of the EU, these measures were taken after intergovernmental bargaining on the initiative of two member state countries – Germany and France.

2014-2015 the situation changes drastically. In the center of Figure 3 there is only the newly elected prime minister of the Czech Republic – Bohuslav Sobotka. All the other 14 political figures are positioned on the two poles and are clearly in favor either of more centralization or of more decentralization of governance in the EU:



**Figure 3: Centralization and decentralization of governance in the EU (2014-2015)**

This result means that there is no shift from one mode of governance to the other, but rather polarization of the opinions in the EU regarding the dominating mode of governance and the European integration process as a whole. This trend can be best seen in the arguments used 2010-2011 and 2014-2015. Over the course of the last five years there is a clear exacerbation of the rhetoric and usage of sharper arguments. For example 2010-2011 some of the selected political figures spoke about the need for some member state countries to be released from the Eurozone. Now there are arguments for the dissolution of the Eurozone. Another example is the statement that the member state countries must take control over their own borders, which was replaced by the argument that the Schengen area has to be dissolved, because the free movement of people is not of their best interest. On the other hand there is support for the idea that more economic and fiscal integration must lead to more political integration in the EU.

In the period 2010-2015 the main conflict lines between the member states are the economic and debt crisis and the migration policy in the EU, while there is a consensus about the leading role of the EU in the energy policy field. The polarization of opinions regarding the dominating mode of governance means that the EU did not handle the problems it faced in the best possible way. The main problem is that the EU is not functioning

optimally in its current form. In a policy area, where the EU has exclusive competence, the initiative for change comes from the member state countries and in a policy area, where the member state countries have not given up their national sovereignty, the EU is being criticized that it is not taking any measures. The explanation comes from the German chancellor Angela Merkel who supports the usage of the so called „European method“. This method is a combination of the community method and the intergovernmental method and is results-based. The policy area and the division of competencies do not matter at all. The problem is that only few of the EU member state countries have the power to promote common European goals and measures. This fact raises the question whether these goals and measures are truly „common“. In the near future there will be a serious debate about the future of the European integration process. Most probably other member state countries will join Great Britain in its intention to reform the EU.

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## ЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИЯ И ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИЯ НА ОБЩЕСТВЕННОТО УПРАВЛЕНИЕ В ЕС

**Резюме:** Научният доклад ще се фокусира върху процесите на централизация и децентрализация на ЕС в периода 2010-2015 г. В настоящата си форма ЕС благоприятства съвместното съществуване на два модуса на обществено управление – ЕС като федерация и ЕС като съюз на независими държави, единият от които винаги доминира над другия. Ще бъдат представени резултати от изследване на позициите (анализ на съдържанието) на политически фигури от шест страни членки по предварително избрани теми в рамките на изследвания период. По-голямата част от тези политически фигури са участвали, а някои от тях продължават да участват в институциите на ЕС и чрез защитаваните от тях позиции за справяне с гореизброените проблеми директно влияят върху избора на доминиращия модус на обществено управление в ЕС.

**Ключови думи:** Европейски съюз; обществено управление; модуси; система; макромодел

