

Hungary's Behaviour in the European Union's Response to Russia's Aggressions against Ukraine (2014-2024): The Challenges to Consistency and Coherence under the Lens of Post-Functionalism

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed an increasingly heterogeneous European Union (EU), where the rise of nationalism threatens the unity of the European project. However, the war in Ukraine that broke out in 2022 gave rise to a unique moment in the EU's history, where member states were in agreement about the EU's response to Russia, apart from Hungary. An important context for Hungary's behaviour over the past decade is its historical past, marked by historical traumas related to imperial rule and political instability. On the one hand, Hungary's position within the EU is controversial due to violations of the Rule of Law and Eurosceptic positions and behaviours; on the other hand, the ties between Russia and Hungary are complex and cover different areas, from cultural affinities to economic dependence. However, with Hungary's entry into the EU and the gradual adoption of democratic and liberal values, its relationship with Russia became a point of tension within the EU. Therefore, it is imperative to analyse how Hungary's non-alignment with the EU's official positions affects the European project and its legitimacy. The research question is formulated as follows: How does Hungary affect the consistency of the European Union's position towards Russia in the war with Ukraine? The research involves a comparative thematic analysis in which official speeches and communications from EU representatives and representatives of the Hungarian government, especially Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, are analysed. This is done to compare both sides' positions on different issues related to the war in Ukraine. Hungary's non-alignment with official European behaviours and positions will be analysed through the post-functionalist theory of European integration. This theoretical approach allows for an analysis focused on politicisation, public opinion, collective identities and multi-level governance, which are directly linked to the Eurosceptic, anti-liberal and anti-democratic trend witnessed in Hungary in recent years. This research aims to analyse Hungary's behaviour and how it affects the EU's consistency in the case of the war in Ukraine and how it might affect the European project more broadly.

Keywords: European Union; Consistency; Hungary; Ukraine War; Post-functionalism