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## **Rhetorical Play in a Theater of War: Contesting narratives and the European Union's role in the war in Ukraine.**

Cresson, Pierre

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**Rhetorical play in a theater of war:  
Contesting narratives and the European Union's role in the war in Ukraine.**



Leiden University  
BsC Political Science  
International Relations and Organisations  
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Supervisor: Dr. A. Akbik  
Second Reader: Dr. Boin A.

Pierre Cresson  
S2799626  
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## 1. Introduction

On the 24th of February 2022, the Kremlin launched its special operation in Ukraine and unleashed shadows of the previous century on the European continent. While violating the most essential principles of international law, the invasion served as a shock for a long-time dream: Europe de la Défense (Ministère des Armées, 2022). The reaction and unity of the member states were unforeseen and led to the adoption of unprecedented measures including financing of Ukraine through the European Peace Facility (EPF), activation of the Temporary Protective Directives (TPD), several economic sanction packages, and energetic imports restrictions (Council of Europe, 2023). These decisions reinforced pre-existing sanctions oriented toward Russia but imply direct costs for the EU constituents such as skyrocketing gas and electricity prices, an unrivaled wave of immigration, and increasing inflation (Reuters, 2022). As highlighted by the French president and the Vice President of the European Commission, these costs are not fated but the price of freedom and democracy (EEAS, 2022). To legitimize these costs and the suspension of normalcy, leaders need to create narratives to fill in the cognitive voids induced by crises (Boin & al., 2016, p. 80). The events led the different political actors to make sense of the crisis and frame it within their political agendas (Wiertz et al., 2023, p. 5). Despite their lack of legislative capacity to influence the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have been key actors in the preparation of the different sanction packages (Bosse, 2022, pp. 535-538). However, essentializing the role of MEPs in their voting power undermines the importance of debate (Wiesner, 2014, pp. 101-103). The performative act of discourses in the European Parliament (EP) allows the exposition of European coalitions and domestic political parties' positions. Moreover, it allows them to present their perception of reality and the crisis and more importantly to provide narratives in opposition to the dominant thinking via counter-framings (Wiesner, 2014, pp.101-103). Contradicting or presenting a critical assessment of a situation requires the decision-makers and their support to justify their behaviors.

Because our societies are fundamentally shaken by the events in Ukraine, EP plenary sessions are crucial to debates what are the role of the EU and the European community, the emotional

implications of the war, and the potential consequences deriving from the actor's decisions. To construct their discourses and convince, orators use the art of persuasion: rhetoric which can be defined as: "the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind's adherence to the theses presented for its assent" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 4). While its nature has evolved since its creation by Aristotle, the very essence and core concepts of Logos (reason and logic), Ethos (norms, values, and credentials of institutions) and Pathos (emotions and resonance with the audience) remained (Perelman & Sloane, 2023). The doxa and its opposition use discursive tools to legitimize their advocated policies through complex metaphors or simple talking points with strong exposition effects (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 261). This paper does not aim to explain but to understand the different rhetorical approaches used by MEPs to legitimize their political objectives regarding the EU involvement in the war in Ukraine. Given its exploratory nature, this research will aim at answering: "What are the rhetorical narratives used to discuss the EU involvement in the war in Ukraine?"

The first section will present the state of the academic literature on the EP as a debating arena followed by an analysis of the role of rhetoric and Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. Then, the methodology, data selection, and coding system will be presented. Next, the empirical section will include the presentation of results regarding an in-depth discourse analysis of mainstream coalitions and counter-discourses from marginalized coalitions. To conclude, a final section will cover the main findings, potential limitations, and the relevancy for future research.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Evolution of the European Parliament and Parliamentarians' Principals**

Since its creation in 1958, the European Parliament (EP) has had constantly evolving institutional capabilities and domains of expertise. Whereas no major legislative process changes resulted from the 2009 implementation of the Lisbon Treaty (unlike the 1993 Maastricht Treaty and the 1999 Amsterdam Treaty), this new agreement established codecision as the norm for almost all areas of EU legislation (Petrov et al., 2012, p. 2). This evolution from a "toothless Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community" to an essential political

partner for European decision-making allowed the EP to empirically influence EU decision-making but also to normatively shape the position and politics the EU should adopt (Hix & Høyland, 2013, p. 172). Yet understanding the positioning of MEPs in voting and discourse can be difficult. Whereas members of national parliaments have to navigate between their party leadership and their constituents' interests, Europarliamentarians have to navigate between their domestic party and their European coalition (Koop & al., 2018, pp. 564-568). These two entities whose MEPs are obliged to are referred to as principals. Thus, if the principals' interests of the MEPs disagree and compete, MEPs will have to choose between "communicating" (to their domestic party) and "deciding" (to achieve an international majority) (Hix et al., 2007, p. 89). This duality was found to be more in favor of national parties during the electoral period and where there is high politicization of European politics (Koop & al., 2018, pp. 579-581). Yet, most analyses rely on a strict focus on the voting behavior of MEPs. The essentialization of MEPs' power in their voting decision contribute to the erasure of the importance of the debating function of the parliamentarians.

## 2.2. A debate arena

The EP has often been regarded in research through its legal capacities and its decision power, consequently, its debating arena function has often been overlooked (Wiesner, 2014, pp. 101-103). In recent years, following the Lisbon treaty and the euro crisis, the reinforcement of the EP has sparked a more thorough academic focus on its functioning, and discourse analysis has started to emerge (Warren, 2018; Wendler, 2012). Political actors can shape individuals' perceptions through a constructed discourse "They select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Thus, more than simply establishing their positions to their principals, it allows them to frame a situation that corresponds to their interests. During the 2015 Schengen crisis, European party coalitions have presented competing narratives on the situation that benefited their agenda. The domination of a communitarian perspective facilitated coalitions with anti-migratory agendas to impose their politics (Börzel & Risse, 2018, p. 101). This unique capacity of the Europarliamentarians' coalitions to frame issues and to create narratives over crises enables them to direct public opinion and policies in a direction that might benefit their political agendas (Wiertz et al., 2023, p. 5).

To have debates and political framing, debaters need to have an audience, and whether there is a European public sphere has been subject to debate (Downey & Koenig, 2006, pp. 165-168). Sending messages through debates and framing has importance depending on the audience receiving them. Whether messages are primarily oriented towards the constituents (Downey & Koenig, 2006, pp. 165-168), to domestic parties following the principal-agent theory (Koop et al., 2018), or to other EU institutions (Wiesner, 2014, p. 108) is still academically debated. When focusing on claim makers during EP debates, Slapin and Proksch (2010, p. 342) found that floor speeches are primarily used to indicate the MEP's national party position to its European political group. Such speeches allow them to justify their domestic position and create a positive image for their national party for their re-election. Such an approach joins the aforementioned principal-agent theory (Koop et al., 2018). MEPs belong to European party coalitions, yet diverging preferences based on national situations cannot be effectively represented by these coalitions. Preferences concerning the strategic culture that should be adopted by the EU were found to vary along the Eastern and Western divide (Xue Mi, 2022, p. 21). Moreover, national perception has been increasingly positive toward the development of a European Strategic Culture, especially regarding the CSDP (Xue Mi, 2022, p. 21). Given the increasing interest of domestic actors for a European CSDDP, and the constrained power of MEPs on Security and Defense matters, it could be expected that the EP would be an ideological arena between principals of MEPs.

These discourses allow them to frame a certain situation that then requires political actions, either through reforms or defense of the status quo. In times of crisis, the debating function through political framing and counter-framing (offering a different perception of the situation) is crucial to keep a debate on the understanding of a situation (Boin, 2016, pp. 81-84). It challenges a dominating narrative, doxa, and constrains political leaders to legitimize their decisions (Boin & al, 2016, p. 79). Despite having voting power in every realm (especially concerning the CFSP or Human Rights policies), MEPs use parliamentary debates and deliberation to publicly take a stand and influence the political processes (Wiesner, 2014, p. 108). Classical parliamentarian discourses follow a "pro" and "contra" positioning during plenary sessions which often is followed by a vote on a resolution. This debating function is especially important regarding policy areas the EP does not have co-decision power over (Wiesner, 2014, p. 108).

### 3. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1. The Role of Rhetoric; Ethos, Pathos & Logos

Rhetoric is the art of communicating effectively a persuasive or informative message to an audience (Perelman & Sloane, 2023). While often discredited for being a form of manipulation of the language to convince not by the ideas but with the mastery of words and oratory skills. This vision of "good" and "bad" convincing comes back to the three rhetorical appeals from Aristotle: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos (Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004, p. 2).

*Ethos*: "Character" in ancient Greek, refers to the credibility of the status of the claimant. It reassures the legitimacy of the claimant and indirectly strengthens the veracity of the argument itself.

*Pathos*: "Emotion" in ancient Greek, refers to claims that are based on emotions, compassion, and experiences and are emotional appeals to the audience. The disposition of such claims to shape emotional reactions and affect the content of emotional responses is referred to as emotional resonance (Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004, pp. 15-19).

*Logos*: "reason" in ancient Greek, refers to the logical reasoning and the rationality of the claim. To achieve it, arguments based on facts and empirical evidence have to be advanced by the claimant. This form of rhetorical appeal has long been considered the only "good" way to convince an audience.

The notion of logos has been for a long time separated from ethos and pathos. On the one side, logical claims based on rationality were treated as valid and as belonging to the realm of argumentation. On the other side, claims based on emotions, values, or credibility of the claimant were considered fallacious, based on demagoguery, and belonging to rhetoric. Such approaches were advanced by academics such as Bruner (1986) who separated worthy "paradigmatic" argument against biased "narratives. This dichotomy undermines the credibility of ethos and pathos claims compared to logos and lead to a polarized conceptualization of discourse into: "the influence of good (argumentation) versus the influence of evil (rhetoric)" (Galinari, 2014, p. 533). More than a mere depreciation of ethos and pathos, such conceptualization has contributed to the strict dissociation of the three rhetorical appeals. Yet,



their limits and separation can be blurry, and claims can appeal to multiple of them in the same argument. Thus, they should not be treated as mutually exclusive but as complementary. As phrased by Galinari (2014, p. 526) they are "three sides of the same coin". For example, the disposition of the claimer to its audience through forms of benevolence would be referred to as "eunoia" which would be based on the ethos of the claimant and call on the pathos of the audience. Similarly, logos and pathos have been considered by certain linguists as coming from the same discursive frame (Amossy, 2010, p.173). Academic diversity has led to clashes on the foundation of rationality. While the scientific world associates it with mathematical reasoning as syllogisms, and propositional or predicate logic, psychology has underlined the role of narrative and resonance as a rational form of convincing (Giorgi, 2012, p. 728). As pointed out in the work of Amossy (2010, p. 10), the "self-construction" in a text is particularly complex to rigorously theorize. Thus, the operationalization of the concept of "ethos" in academic research is difficult and the plurality of the academic field using this concept does not facilitate the achievement of a consensus.

### 3.2.Framing the War in Ukraine

While certain scholars have framed differently the causes of the war in Ukraine and have attributed responsibilities to different actors: Mearsheimer (2014) blamed the West and NATO's aggressive enlargement compared to scholars blaming Putin's imperialism and Russia's revisionism (Anghel & Stolle, 2022). The dominant narrative: "doxa" in the West is that the current war is mainly due to Russia and that the EU should "naturally" protect Ukraine and the values it represents: democracy, and freedom (EEAS, 2022). Despite a strong negative depiction of the Russian aggressor and a very positive representation of Ukrainians in media, little attention has been spent on counter-discourses within the EU. In front of the horror of the war and the responsibility of Russia in its triggering, the framing has been evolving from value and right-based claims to moral claims (Bosse, 2022, p. 537). Yet, to legitimize these costs that are imposed on civil society, it is crucial to acknowledge and be able to debate to what extent are the member states ready to bear these costs and support Ukraine. Cognitive linguistics has shown the capability of conscious and unconscious metaphors to shape individuals' values and perceptions (Lakoff, 2002). Thus, it is important to critically assess and investigate the emergence of these social paradigms that are created through discourse. Crisis management studies have shown the importance of frames to fill in a "cognitive void", a disturbance of the status quo and normal societal functioning (Boin, 2016, p. 80). Yet, frames can be tools to serve

political objectives. Despite solely explaining events, they can also induce a reaction that has to be followed (Gross & D'Ambrosio, 2004, pp. 15-18). For example, the framing of the 9/11 terror attacks as an act of war and the recurrent appeal to emotions with notions of good versus evil allowed the Bush administration to unite behind a military intervention in Afghanistan (Entman, 2003, p. 416). Narratives are created through discourse and rhetoric is the analysis of language. Thus, to understand what might appear as a logical answer to the situation in Ukraine, it is essential to look at the different framing of the crisis.

#### **4. Research Design and Methodology:**

##### 4.1. Research Design

The research design aims at understanding and mapping out the connection between ethos, pathos, and logos rhetoric used to frame the war in Ukraine with the country of origin and party membership of the claimants. To do so, several factors such as the country of origin, the political party, the rhetorical approach, and the object of the claim will be coded in Microsoft Excel. The coding will be open given the qualitative approach and the willingness to map out rhetorical tools used by claimants to frame the war and ultimately advance their political agenda. This research follows a discourse analysis design based on a constructivist and interpretivist approach (Hardy et al., 2004, pp. 374-390).

The main objective is not to draw causal inferences but to understand how coalition and national exposure to the war can influence the framing of the crisis. Moreover, the sense of urgency is also expected to reduce politicization in the response to bring to Ukraine. Thus, Polish, Finnish, or Lithuanian MEPs are expected to have a more consistent and pro-EU framing of the situation and similar policies to adopt (disregarding their political parties) compared to French, Spanish or German claim makers. The research will acknowledge the different national situations that might be more specific than a large and simplistic division of East vs. West (i.e. German gas market, Orban's trojan horse of Putin...) (Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017).

As highlighted by the principal-agents theory, MEPs have to mediate between their domestic parties' interests and their European political coalition (Koop et al., 2018). The debates start with a statement made on behalf of the political groups and are followed by the opportunity for individual MEPs to make statements involving solely their credibility. In this second section, parliamentarians have the opportunity to communicate with their domestic principals. Thus, it could be expected that personal factors such as their country of origin (directly correlated with their domestic principal's exposition to the war in Ukraine) or their political parties' interests (whereas they belong to the same political party as their domestic government) are more expressed during this second time of the debate (Quote). Moreover, the rhetorical processes used by claimants might be stronger, less ambiguous, and more cleaving because of two factors; 1) Claimants do not have to reach a consensus with their coalition, and 2) they will be able to directly communicate to their domestic party (their engagement) and other EU institutions (their domestic party's political objectives).

The very open coding and method of analysis used in qualitative content analysis require transparency on potential biases from the researcher. The emotional and geographical distance from the conflict does not imply any form of objectivity regarding the situation in Ukraine. On the contrary, the exposure solely mediated through discourses and strongly influenced by pro-EU involvement can lead to a heavily biased and unidirectional perspective of the conflict. Given the interpretivist approach, the researcher will try to analyze the rhetorical tools used by MEPs, their framing objectives, and political intents with as much objectivity as possible.

## 4.2. Methodology

The war in Ukraine is a very recent phenomenon and drawing causal inferences and being able to analyze the consequences of certain actions might still be early. Yet, it is already possible to research and analyze the way politicians, claim-makers, and decision-makers behave in reaction to the war. This research would aim at understanding the way MEPs frame the war in Ukraine and how they present the behavior of the EU regarding the crisis. The data analyzed will be retrieved from the transcripts of the public debates in the European Parliament and will cover a period of a year from the 16th of February 2022 (just before the Russian operation) when an important debate was held in preparation for a potential military operation to the 16th of February 2023 where a debate on the one year of the Russian invasion was held.

This research will use a qualitative approach, and the main objective will be to retrieve the ideas and norms and to understand if claims related to the situation of the war in Ukraine and how the EU should act towards it rely on pathos (emotions), logos (rationality and logic) or ethos (credibility of the EU). The three rhetorical appeals will be linked with the message conveyed by the maker of the claim and related to their political party and country of origin. The analysis of the claims will oppose on the one side the doxa and accepted frame in the West and on the other side the opposition party that tries to offer a counter-framing of the situation.

**Table 1.**

*Operationalization of Logos, Ethos, and Pathos*

Rhetorical Approaches:	Description:	Examples:
Logos (demonstration and logic)	Argumentation and political objectives are justified by rationality and logic. If the claimant refers to the consequences of certain actions/non-actions. Given the context of war, consequences might instill fear or emotional reactions yet, they will be coded as logos only if they follow a logical induction. Thus, only claims referring to rationality or logic will be coded as “logos”.	<p><i>Pro Involvement:</i> “But what about the mid-term? How do we make sure that we have a sustainable solution and we do not allow Russia to repeat its threatening posture vis-à-vis Ukraine and its other neighbors again and again and again?” (Sergey Lagodinsky, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Against Involvement:</i> “We propose that instead of fueling the escalation, the European Union works to resolve them. It must collaborate with the United Nations in the search for diplomatic and political solutions.” (Manu Pineda, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022)</p>
Ethos (construction of individual)	The Ethos regards the credential, norms, and values of the claim makers or of the institutions it refers to. It can be orientated toward the legitimacy of the EU and NATO or their meaning as institutions. It is also possible that claims regarding individual countries position or ambiguities are made. In the coding, claims concerning to roles/representation of institutions, blame game or values as respect for IL will be coded as Ethos.	<p><i>Pro Involvement:</i> “Our Union was born from the promise of peace, which must remain our one and only compass.” (Stéphane Séjourné, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Against Involvement:</i> “I know you condemn everyone here who speaks out for peace anywhere, but I'm doing it again and raising my voice for peace. This Europe is built on the principles of peace, freedom and prosperity.” (Harald Vilimsky, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023)</p>

Pathos (call on emotions)	Framing of the crisis and arguments that are calling on emotions and feelings. Such claims can have strong emotional resonance with the audience which can trigger actions and decision making. In the coding, claims referring to emotions and sense of rightness will be coded as such.	<i>Pro Involvement:</i> “Ukrainians have only one choice, either to stand up for themselves or die as a nation. We too have a choice. We either betray Ukraine by watching frozen in fear, or we do everything possible to save this brave nation and also bolster our security. The correct choice should be obvious to everyone.” (Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2022)
		<i>Against Involvement:</i> “I warn you against the military escalation and arm race that would put our continent to fire and swords.” (Manon Aubry, 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2022)

To analyze the different claims made by parliamentarians a specific coding frame has been developed and is presented in the appendix. Interventions made in the EP are most often concise and can be expressed in statements lasting up to two or three minutes. This timespan allows the MEPs to frame a certain situation and to express a certain politic to adopt in reaction to the situation (Proksch & Slapin, 2010, p. 342). Yet the structures of these speeches are flexible and certain claims can merge framing with the objective in a single sentence, create a certain narrative that does not call for a specific politic, or even call for political actions without legitimizing their requests. The coding reports different sets of information ranging from the name of the claim maker ( i.e. Michael Gahler), the date of their intervention ( i.e. 07/06/2022), the topic of the session parliamentary (i.e. The EU's Foreign, Security, and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine), whereas the intervention is on behalf of the coalition ( i.e. No), their political party ( i.e. European People's Party), the country of origin of the claimant ( i.e. Germany), their rhetorical approach to EU involvement (i.e. Pathos Pro EU Involvement), the object of the claim ( i.e. increasing export of military equipment), the quote justifying the rhetoric choice (i.e. "On closer inspection, I discover many elements of a real fascist war of annihilation with Horror."), the quote of the object (i.e. "But above all, it is acutely important to deliver everything that is reasonable to Ukraine. And that is why I expressly criticize the attitude of the German Chancellor, who is doing everything to delay and ensure that Ukraine does not get what it needs to defend itself in time."), and lastly their framing purpose (i.e. "Russian war of aggression"). As aforementioned, speeches' structures are diverging, and given the conciseness of their intervention, the rhetorical approaches used by claimants influence the

legitimization of their political request (whereas the justification is explicit or implicit). Moreover, a section on the framing objective has been added and refers to the specific wording used by the claimant to describe the war. These words and little sentences are talking points that through repeated exposure to an audience reinforce the positive acceptance of these ideas; this phenomenon is referred to as the repeated mere-exposure effect (Zajonc, 1969, p. 1).

## **5. Findings and Discussion**

Parties traditionally opposed to EU involvement in the war have tried to counter-frame the situation of the event of the war in Ukraine. Whereas the framing of the situation and Russia was heavily disputed before the beginning of the "special operation", the narrative of the "criminal Russia" has been dominating quickly after the 24th of February and was reinforced after the tragic events of Bucha (see appendix Table 2.). Despite the doxa, relying on the horror of the war (pathos), the role of the EU and NATO in defending International Law and Human rights (ethos), and the fear that if Russia is not stopped now, it will continue its aggressions (logos), opposition parties like "The Left" have consistently tried to provide another framing of the situation to advance their political agendas (see appendix Table 3.). Other parties have been targeted for their compliance with the Kremlin such as Identity and Democracy (ID), yet their political objectives were more ambiguous, and counter-framing less consistent (see appendix Table 4.). The presentation of the results will follow a structure divided into three parts. Firstly, the rhetorical construction of the doxa from mainstream parties and their framing of the war will be presented. The second section will cover the narratives and political objectives advanced by radical parties: The Left and ID. Finally, the rhetorical approaches used to counter the doxa and advance different narratives and political objectives vis-à-vis the war will be presented.

### **5.1. Russian War of Aggression and Rhetorical Composition of the Doxa**

Depending on the ideas they try to convey, parliamentarians will use different rhetorical approaches. The research has shown that depending on the topic that will be discussed during the session, the argumentation will diverge, it is also important to note that the events occurring

during the conflict also have an impact on the perception of the MEPs. The rhetorical approaches and framing used by mainstream parties were based on three axes to justify the European involvement in the war in Ukraine.

#### *5.1.a. Pathos claim*

After the emergence of the first evidence of the Bucha massacre on April first, Bosse (2022, p. 540) noted a shift from norm-based claims to value-based claims and argued that it facilitated the adoption of the TPD and economic sanctions. Regarding the rhetorical approaches, certain debates are more based on the emotions and values of MEPs than others. Concerning the "classification of Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism" debate held on the 18th of October 2022, a dominance of emotional justification is observed within the supporting coalitions of the proposal: European People's Party (EPP), Progressive Alliance Socialist and Democrats (S&D), Renew Europe, Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA), and the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR). Given the difficulty of scholars to agree on a common definition (Schmid, 2011, p. 158), MEPs supporting the proposal generally based their rhetoric on pathos and emotions. The violence of the conflict and the methods used by the Russian army are cited to legitimize the use of the term terrorism but the meaning of the word terrorism itself is blurred.

*“How else shall we call it when Russia confiscates millions of tons of Ukrainian grain in the ports and then blackmails the international community with famine? {...} And of course, it is also terrorism when Russia threatens Ukraine and the rest of the world with nuclear annihilation.”* (Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, 18 October 2022).

In this case, the emotions sparked by the threat and the danger of the Russian government do not relate to the very essence of terrorism but to political condemnation. The misuse of the term terrorism for political end could result in an understanding as explained by a former ICC judge: "a term without any legal significance. That is merely a convenient way of alluding to activities, {...} widely disapproved of and in which either the methods used are unlawful or the targets protected" (Higgins, 1997). Other MEPs based their arguments on comparison with historical figures and narratives to create emotional resonance with their audience (Gross and D'Ambrosio, 2004, pp. 15-19).

*“Those who say that Russia under Putin must not be humiliated as Germany was humiliated after Versailles are misleading. Today we face Hitler’s analogy, who grew out of Stalin’s unacknowledged crimes and evaluated crimes. The situation now is similar to that of Hitler’s and Stalin’s war in Europe. So we must now defeat Putin as Hitler was defeated .”* (Rasa Juknevičienė, 7 June 2022).

The emotional and historical resonance of such claims has a strong impact on the audience. If the audience accepts to portray the Kremlin's leader as "Hitler" or "Stalin", then the reaction of the EU and the member states have to be without concession. It is not possible to negotiate with a Nazi regime nor to find an agreement thus the conflict must be complete and without any concession. This narrative implies an absolute involvement of all possible means, and the political objectives were subsequently related to the necessity to "defeat the war criminal Putin" (Rasa Juknevičienė, 7 June 2022). Surprisingly, this claim was made on behalf of the EPP during the debate on the future of the CSDP. Such cleaving positions are typically held during debates by individual MEPs during the second section of the debate.

#### *5.1.b. Ethos Claim*

Whereas an instrumentalization of emotions has been observed by the dominant coalition to support a stronger involvement of the member states, the principle of cohesion and the request to act was mainly based on the role of the EU. Defining the EU and speaking on behalf of the Union is not new (Maricut-Akbik, 2021). Institutions are only what individuals consider them to be; i.e. because the European Central Bank is a regulatory monetary institution, it is not expected to shape the migratory policy of the Schengen area. However, the identity of the EU is constantly evolving, and its scope of influence has been increasing over recent years what was solely created as an economic cooperation is aspired by some to become an: "Europe de la Défense" (Ministère des Armées, 2022). Thus, this European identity is not fixed, and shaping it is crucial to legitimize EU involvement.

*“Colleagues, Europe is home to some of the most developed democracies in the world where human rights and the rule of law reign supreme. So tell me, colleagues, why don’t we have the right tools to defend these values if they are threatened by malicious actors?”* (Katalin Cseh, 7th June 2022).



By framing the EU as representing values of freedom, democracy, respect for international law, and the right to self-determination, the claimant legitimizes the involvement of the EU in the war in Ukraine. After this speech, the Hungarian MEP from Renew Group requested the end of unanimity decision-making and the generalization of Qualified Majority Voting because of the veto power of Hungary (see appendix Table 2.). Yet Hungary does not represent the values praised by the speaker which interrogates if this conception of the EU identity is shared. Thus, it is important to question and debate on what the EU is and what is its role in the war in Ukraine.

### *5.1.c. Logos Claim*

Whereas Putin has been framed as an imperialist leading a war of expansion, it is important to note that the logical claim calling on the risk of a larger invasion of EU member states has been less dominant than the previously highlighted Pathos and Ethos claims. Such claims are most often combined with an emotional appeal to the "criminal nature" of the Russian invasion (Stéphane Séjourné, 6th April 2022).

*“Weakness, as I say, produces monsters and Putin must be stopped wherever he is. The threat from him is not to Ukraine alone. His threat is to all of Europe and, above all, to all of Eastern Europe: Poland, Lithuania, the entire Baltic, Bulgaria, and Romania.”*  
(Hermann Tertsch, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022).

The underused logical argument of the expansionist nature of the Russian Federation highlights the different natures between the EU and Russia's understanding of what is at stake. While certain scholars emphasized the responsibility of NATO's proximity in the triggering of the war (Mearsheimer, 2014), the EU prefers approaches based on values, norms, and international laws. Two conceptions of international relations are thus clashing: on one side a constructivist approach and on the other side an aggressive realist understanding of International Relations. Whereas the post-cold War era led the EU to develop its conception of external security with constructivist tools (Christiansen et al., 1999, p. 530), realist theories might be better adapted to explain the unitary behavior of member states in the aftermath of the Russian invasion (Hyde-Price, 2006, pp. 231-232; Bosse, 2022, p. 534). However, despite adopting a more realist position in practice, discourses of mainstream parties' MEPs remain oriented toward a

constructivist approach based on emotions, values, norms, and roles of the EU that has for a long time been incarnated by the EU.

## 5.2. Counter-framing and political objectives of mainstream coalitions

Within the EP, two parties expressed restraint vis-à-vis the EU involvement in the war in Ukraine. Both far wings of the parliament: The Left and ID adjusted their positions, narratives, objectives, and even participation depending on the war in Ukraine and to a certain extent in opposition to the doxa promoted by central mainstream coalitions. Whereas their counter-framing has not been systematic and mainly used to promote their political agendas, behavioral and rhetorical approaches have been observed from the two parties to position themselves. While the directness of the Left represented the main counter-framing force in the EP, ID has adopted a more ambiguous and muffled stance on the role of the EU in the war.

### 5.2.a. *The Left*

The position adopted by the furthest left coalition of the EP has been consistent throughout the crisis and the political objectives exposed since the beginning of the war. With an understanding of the EU and its role oriented around two axes, The Left has adopted different framing and rhetorical approaches depending on which axes they were defending. On the one hand, the coalition advocated for an anti-NATO position, a European third-way, prioritization of the Peace Process, and against sectorial economic sanctions, while on the other hand, The Left has defended the activation of the Temporary Protective Directives, the erasure of the Ukrainian debt and sanctions towards oligarchs. While the first axis is in opposition to the doxa and the direction adopted by the EU, the second axis is supporting EU involvement.

*“When Russia attacks Ukraine, Europe sanctions, of course. But when the United States bombs Iraq, no sanctions, when Saudi Arabia bombs Yemen, no sanctions, when we, the European Union, bomb and destroy Libya, no sanctions, and when Israel is colonizing Palestine, no sanctions. It's two weights, two measures.”* (Marc Botenga, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022).

*“I say it here with seriousness: this situation has a person responsible, Vladimir Putin, who will have to pay for all these war crimes, for the rapes used as a weapon of war, for the carnage of Irpin, the destruction of Mariupol, for the Boutcha mass graves. {...} We must also make a clear commitment, without conditions: let's cancel the Ukrainian debt!”* (Manon Aubry, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

Whereas the opposition to the war was embedded in a logically driven discourse based on the risk of escalation while emphasizing the hypocrisy of NATO and the EU as institutions, the economic support to Ukraine through the EU was based on strongly emotionally charged narratives. It is important to note the role of political agendas when parliamentarians are framing the war. Hence, when a greater EU involvement overlaps with objectives advanced by The Left: open migration policy, anti-liberal and neo-Keynesians economic approaches, energetic transition, and harsher taxation on wealthier individuals, MEPs do not hesitate to adopt the dominant narrative used by mainstream coalitions. Thus, even within traditionally opposing coalitions, an instrumentalization of emotions (which can be legitimate) is observable when political agendas are coinciding. Narratives are not an end in themselves, in the case of The Left they are tools to support their objectives. What matters is not the nature of Putin and this war, but how could they be presented to advance a political agenda.

### *5.2.b. Identity and Democracy*

On the other hand, the ID coalition had more difficulties to find consensus and to give clear directions. Contradicting narratives, rhetoric, and political objectives have been observed and the often-consensual positions defended during the speech made on behalf of the party are often contrasted by the MEPs individuals' interventions.

*“From my point of view, the question “What should one do instead?” is also easy to answer: namely everything that de-escalates.”* (Harald Vilimsky, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

*“What you really have to do: to convince more EU countries to give more weapons to Ukraine to fight against this Nazi army.”* (Jaak Madison, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022).

These statements follow the rhetorical approaches aforementioned of rationality and escalation-avoidance in opposition to the need for a response supported by emotional and

historical resonance. The pathos-logos opposition to the EU involvement in the war reflects the doxa and counter-framing divide between mainstream and radical (mainly The Left) coalitions. The difficulty of ID to find a common objective compared to The Left might not be related solely to the ideology but also to the country of origin of the constituents of the parties. The previously highlighted opposition of the two ID members: Harald Vilimsky (Austria) and Jaak Madison (Estonia) underlines the divide between the Baltic, Eastern states, and Western Europe. MEPs' domestic constituents' exposure to the war was found to have an important impact on their framing of the situation, especially within opposition parties. Whereas mainstream parties supporting the EU involvement were found to have unity in their approaches to the war, ID had strong divergences between its members' perceptions. This internal support for the doxa was mainly carried by Finish and Estonian MEPs and often based on an intense Pathos-embedded claim. On the other hand, The Left has solely one constituent from a directly exposed country: Finland. Despite the absence of empirical contextual evidence supporting the influence of personal exposition as a factor in support of the EU involvement, the more intense rhetoric (supported by a stronger pathos) seems correlated with the exposition of MEPs. Such findings are coherent with the principal-agent theory and the potential competition between Europarliamentarians' domestic parties and their European coalition. Thus, the asymmetrical exposition between the bordering countries (afraid of a potential future Russian invasion) and Western countries (mainly concerned by the economic consequences of the war) is also highlighted in the discourses of radical parties within the EP. Another important factor to explain the divergence between The Left's two axes and ID's hazy objectives might depend on the essence of the two coalitions. When analyzing both coalitions' statutes for the period of 2019-2024, it appears that while the former has a clear ideological direction on fiscality, NATO, trade justice, and peace advocacy, the far-right coalition lacks a clear political agenda on vital questions out of migratory raised during the war (ID, 2019, pp. 3-4; The Left, 2022).

### 5.3. Rhetorical Responses and Micro-polarization to the Doxa

#### *5.3.a. NATO Involvement and Countering Pathos Arguments*

The dominant framing of Putin as a war criminal based on the human rights violations and the mass killings accompanied by the evidence circulating in the media left few to no space for the

opposition to counter-frame. The horrors of the war are undeniable, thus when advancing anti-EU involvement positions, instead of arguing on the foundation of these claims, the opposition has mainly focused on their instrumentalization and their political agendas. Rather than countering pathos with pathos, claim-makers have used different rhetorical approaches to delegitimize or undermine the arguments and framing made by their opposition. During the session on the condemnation of Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism, the Irish MEP of "The Left" argued on the hypocrisy of the condemnation.

*“When Russia drops bombs on built-up areas in Ukraine, I have no doubt that the people in Ukraine underneath the bombs are terrorized. It’s a form of terrorism. When the US and NATO bombed Afghanistan for 20 years and killed several hundred thousand and displaced millions, they were terrorizing the people. {...} When France and the UK and others armed the Saudis and the UAE to commit genocide in Yemen, where the UN said that over 400 000 are dead and 16 million are starving because of a genocide being carried out with the support of the US, the UK, France, and several European states, is that terrorism? When are ye going to wake up and start living in the real world?” (Mick Wallace, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022).*

This critic of NATO and the West as hypocrites is not in opposition to the condemnation of Russia, yet it allows the opposition to nuance the strong emotional narrative advanced by the leading coalition in that case (EPP, Renew, Greens/EFA, and partially S&D). Whereas such claims might seem to rely on emotions following the description of the consequences of these wars, the main element of the claim is based on the Ethos of the EU and associate it with NATO as a singular actor. It thus asks an important question: How can they condemn if they are also guilty? Instead of debating in substance on condemning potential violence, the rhetoric of The Left was mainly based on the form: who is the EU/NATO to say what terrorism is? This narrative is not recent and comes from a long-lasting NATO skeptic position that was transcending the political spectrum. Before the Russian special operation and despite support from the coalition in their statements (except from "The Left" who has consistently been anti-Atlanticism), MEPs from S&D (Dietmar Koester, 16th February 2022), Greens/EFA (Mounir Satouri, 16th February 2022), and ID (Harald Vilimsky & Bernhard Zimniok, 16th February 2022) have taken critical position toward NATO's involvement in Ukraine. The critics of the involvement of NATO are often related to the aggressive realist perspectives advanced by Mearsheimer (2014).

*“As the well-known American political scientist John Mearsheimer put it: No great power wants to have another great power as a neighbor.”* (Bernhard Zimniok, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022).

This argument follows logical reasoning which explains "rationally" the response of Russia but lacks depth when confronted with the emotions sparked by the atrocities of the war. Hence, such positions have completely disappeared from the internal member of mainstream coalitions of the S&D and Greens/EFA after the beginning of the "Russian special operation". While The Left has maintained throughout the crisis a very critical position towards the Trans-Atlantic cooperation, the rhetoric shifted from a strongly emotional criticism of US/NATO involvement in Ukraine to a critique of the Ethos of NATO as an institution (Wallace, 18th October 2022).

*“The warmongering of NATO and the US these past few months has done nothing for peace in Europe.”* (Mick Wallace, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022).

### *5.3.b. Principals' Clash in a United Parliament*

Out of the 32 declarations from the supporting coalitions (EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR) made after the invasion, only two claims have been against an objective to facilitate EU support to Ukraine. Both these claims were made by ECR members from the Polish governing party: "Prawo I Sprawiedliwość" (PIS).

*“In a time of war, there is no time for experiment, no time for emancipation from transatlantic cooperation, and no time for federal experiments with QMV. Just without the QMV, we already adopted six packages of sanctions, but we cannot accept the weapon delivery to Ukraine.”* (Witold Jan Waszczykowski, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022).

Both oppositions were regarding the substitution of the unanimity decision-making by a Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) on EU foreign policy matters. The praised "unity" within the EP but mostly among the supporters of an increasingly involved EU was found to face solely one "micro" dissensus where national principals (PIS) and thus Polish veto power was at stake. On the other hand, it could be argued that the extension of the QMV to foreign policy affairs to facilitate the EU support to Ukraine is a subterfuge to undermine Poland and

Hungary's autonomy. This opposition reflects the importance of domestic parties and the communicating role of their MEPs to the EU. Despite reaffirming their opposition to the QMV, the claim-makers still emphasized the importance of the EU involvement in Ukraine which is crucial to this political coalition counting 24 PIS members and 40 out of 66 of its members importantly exposed to the war.

## **6. Conclusion:**

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the debating function of the EP has been crucial in framing the situation and the direction the EU should adopt to face the reminiscent nightmare of European wars. MEPs' discourses allowed them to express their national understanding of the war and coalitional aspiration for the future of our continent (Koop et. al., 2018). Through rhetorical performances, claim makers positioned themselves in "pro" or "contra" towards the EU involvement in the war on different matters (Wiesner, 2014). Moreover, convergences of allocutions contributed to creating a shared narrative among mainstream parties through the principle of mere exposition (Zajonc, 1969, p. 1). This doxa was found to be based on three unequally used rhetorical arguments legitimizing the involvement of the EU in the war: a dominant pathos emphasizing human rights violations, massacres, rapes, and using historical resonance; a supporting ethos based on the nature of the EU and the duty to uphold norms and values of democracy, freedom and respect of international law; a subtle logos emphasizing the risk of further to the West Russian expansion. This rhetorical arrangement coincides with a European constructivist approach to international relations (Christiansen et al., p. 530). The Left and ID coalitions have both offered a different framing to the war. Moreover, the exposition of MEPs to the war and their coalition's internal political cohesion was found to have an important effect on the clarity and vocality of the adopted position. Furthermore, the evolution of the war led to an erasure of dissonant voices within the mainstream coalition especially related to the role of NATO in Eastern Europe. The use of competing narratives and rhetorical argumentation by The Left depending on their political objectives' compatibility with the EU involvement in the war highlighted a crucial phenomenon: narratives are tools for political objectives. Lastly, even within the "united" parliament, dissensus were found between national and European parliamentarians' principals. The findings of this research are mainly

informative and more systematic research might use these findings to understand the positioning of political coalition during crisis.

Given the recency of the war, narratives are still constructed and the public and researchers' reduced access to unbiased and free data hinders the conduct of "more objective" research. Moreover, internal dynamics between MEPs and their domestic political parties are difficult to measure. Similar to the opacity surrounding internal dynamics between parliamentarians outside of the public debates. Consequently, drawing conclusions solely from the public position expressed by MEPs during the debate might not be a perfectly accurate representation of their position. Lastly, it is important to note the absence of political coalitions during certain debates and the consequences it has on research (ID's absence during the debate on Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism). Thus, future research could investigate the importance of bottom-up pressure from national political parties to shape the EU crisis response within the EP or the difference between Brussel's and Moscow's narratives of the war along the constructivist and realist approaches.



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## **8. Appendix:**

Following are three samples of the coding frame. Given the requested size of the Appendix remains under 25 pages, the following section will only represent a sample of the whole coding. The three tables are representing the main findings of the 10 parliamentary sessions that have been analyzed and only 32 of the 95 coded interventions. Table 2 is organized around the rhetorical elements used in the Doxa. The first section highlights the Pathos, the second the Ethos, and the last section is on the Logos. Table 3 is oriented around the two axes of argumentation of The Left, firstly contra-EU involvement and secondly Pro EU involvement. Lastly, Table 4 presents the position of ID and is structured similarly to Table 3.

**Table 2.***Coding Frame: EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR dominant narrative and rhetoric*

Claimant	Date	Topic of the Session	On behalf of the group	Political Group	Country	Rhetorical Approach	Object of the Claim	Quote: Justification	Quote: Objectives	Framing
Michael Gahler	7th June 2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine (debate)	No	EPP	Germany	Pathos pro EU involvement	Export Military Heavy Equipment	On closer inspection, I discover many elements of a real fascist war of annihilation with Horror.	But above all, it is acutely important to deliver everything that is reasonable to Ukraine. And that is why I expressly criticize the attitude of the German Chancellor, who is doing everything to delay and ensure that Ukraine does not get what it needs to defend itself in time.	Russian war of aggression
Rasa Juknevičienė	7th June 2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian	Yes	EPP	Lithuania	Pathos pro EU involvement	defeat Russian regime	those who say that Russia under Putin must not be humiliated as Germany was humiliated after Versailles are misleading. Today we face Hitler's analogy, who grew out of Stalin's unacknowledged	the main threat to the security of the entire European continent is our most important task. This requires helping Ukraine to defend its territory and not being afraid to believe that Russia can be different. The	N/A



									invasion of Ukraine (debate)	crimes and evaluated crimes. The situation now is similar to that of Hitler's and Stalin's war in Europe. So we must now defeat Putin as Hitler was defeated	war criminal Putin must be isolated. To have a different Russia, the current regime must be defeated.
Viola von Cramon-Taubadel	18th October 2022	Recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism	Yes	Green s/EFA Group	Germany	Pathos & Ethos pro EU involvement	recognising Russia as a state sponsors terrorism	It is terrorism when hundreds of Ukrainian civilians are tortured, raped, murdered and thrown into mass graves in Irpin, Bucha and Izyum. How else shall we call it when Russia confiscates millions of tons of Ukrainian grain in the ports and then blackmails the international community with famine?	Nothing describes Russia's actions in Ukraine better than the word terrorism.	Russia is state sponsors of terrorism.	
Lukasz Kohut	18th October 2022	Recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism	No	S&D	Poland	Pathos pro EU involvement	recognising Russia as a terrorist state, Reject of Russian	Seemingly obvious, but you have to talk about it loudly and directly, because history likes to forget. In 1945, the Red Army did not liberate the Silesian lands. She did the same as today in Ukraine. She destroyed, burned, killed and raped.	And we here in the European Parliament must stand firm behind them. It's time to throw Russian diplomats out of the European Union, both from Berlin and Warsaw.	Russia is terrorist state	

								diplomats	Half a million Silesian, German and Polish women were raped.	
										In time of war it's a time for unity, a united response to aggression. But what we have instead, we have hesitation in some capitals, like Berlin and Paris, ideas like Strategic Compass, European autonomy, or QMV.
										In time of war, there is no time for experiment, no time for emancipation from transatlantic cooperation, and no time for federal experiments with QMV. Just without the QMV, we adopted already six packages of sanctions, but we cannot accept the delivery of weapon to Ukraine.
Witold Jan Waszczykowski	7th June 2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine (debate)	No	ECR	Poland	Ethos against EU involvement	anti QMV, Pro Export Military Heavy Equipment	although we are protected by NATO and US nuclear umbrella, security is not granted forever.		N/A
Anna Fotyga	7th June 2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion	Yes	ECR	Poland	Ethos against EU involvement	Against QMV	gain, the ones that help the most are the US, the UK as well, and the countries in my region. Countries such as the United States and the countries of my region, belonging to the European Union, led by	The problem is that the slowest are also the strongest. And that's why I don't support qualified majority decision making.	N/A

		of Ukraine (debate)							the Polish President Lech Kaczyński, were the ones that supported Georgia in defending its independence.	
Katalin Cseh	7th June 2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine (debate)	No	Renew	Hungary	Ethos pro EU involvement	Pro QMV	Colleagues, Europe is home to some of the most developed democracies in the world where human rights and rule of law reign supreme. So tell me, colleagues, why don't we have the right tools to defend these values if they are threatened by malicious actors?	But honestly, tell me colleagues, are they enough? When Russia is knocking on our door, openly targeting our Member States, the quickest solution is to scrap the unanimity rule in Council. It really is that simple. We wasted an entire month with sanctions. For one month we put our indecisiveness out on full display. And what was the outcome? The perception that one Member State won and the EU as a collective lost. It's time to get serious about ending unanimity.	Russian war of aggression
Tonino Picula	16th February 2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military	No	S&D	Croatia	Ethos & Logos pro EU involvement	EU Strategy towards Russia, Economic Sanction Individu	Ukraine is a sovereign country with internationally recognised borders that has a full right to decide on its geopolitical orientation. The ongoing crisis has shown once again that	This should be an urgent call for the EU to enhance our own ability to respond quickly and in a unified way. While awaiting a much-needed comprehensive EU strategy towards Russia, we stand with Ukraine. We	N/A

		threat against Ukraine (debate)					al and Energetic	any local crisis in Europe can turn into a global threat with possible deteriorating consequences.	should also work to increase the potential costs of Russian aggressions by introducing sanctions against individuals, banks and companies involved in plans to attack Ukraine. Halting Nord Stream 2, in case of aggression, would increase our leverage while doing all of the above.	
Andrius Kubilius	16th February 2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)	No	EPP	Lithuania	Logos pro EU involvement	Economic & Political Integration	integration strategy for Ukraine is the most effective long-term strategy to deter Russia. European integration and Western unity is a unique European instrument to keep long-term peace on the European continent.	Future of democracy in Russia, not a dialogue with autocratic Putin, is a long-term goal for a new security architecture in Europe. That is why the West must invest in the political, military and economic success of Ukraine. EU integration is the only way to create such a successful democratic Ukraine, for that purpose, the EU should put forward for Ukraine a new process of accelerated reintegration beginning with integration into the EU single market.	Putin Imperial war
Antonio Tajani	7th June 2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and	No	EPP	Italy	Logos pro EU	EU defense, strategic compass	The world after this war will change. China will be the great director of a political operation to	This is why we need to react with politics. But foreign policy also needs a defense tool. The strategic	N/A

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Defence  
Policy  
after the  
Russian  
invasion  
of  
Ukraine  
(debate)

involvement  
nt , NATO  
support

invade half the world  
with its products and will  
have the Russian  
Federation at its side, if  
things go on like this.

compass, a regular  
Council of Defense  
Ministers of the Union,  
greater cooperation on  
intelligence matters are  
certainly a step in the right  
direction, but more  
courage is needed. We  
must accelerate the  
construction of a common  
army, of common armed  
forces, which will  
certainly have to  
collaborate with NATO  
and at the same time  
strengthen the European  
presence within the  
Atlantic Alliance.

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**Table 3.**

*Coding Frame: The Left two axes and rhetoric*

Claimant	Date	Topic of the session	On behalf of the group	Political Group	Country	Rhetorical Approach	Object of the claim	Quote: Justification	Quote: Object	Framing
Martin Schirdean	16th Feb. 2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)	Yes	The Left	Germany	Ethos against EU involvement	Deescalation, Third Way	A new cold war has been unleashed on Europe that threatens to escalate into a hot war. The exclusion of Russia from the G8, the suspension of the NATO-Russia Council meetings, the suspension of the Normandy format meetings and the non-implementation of the Minsk agreement are an expression of a mutual diplomatic failure. NATO is not the international regulatory power. That role still falls to international law and the United Nations.	The key to overcoming this crisis, which calls into question and threatens the entire European peace order, lay in diplomacy, in de-escalation and in mutual verbal and military disarmament.	N/A
Manu Pineda	16th Feb. 2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against	No	The Left	Spain	Ethos & Logos against EU involvement	Deescalation, NATO disengagement	NATO is using Europe, and especially the borders with Russia, as a huge military base at the service of commercial, military and geostrategic interests that are not those of Europe. Mr President, we have come very close to the two major nuclear powers coming	I ask you not to allow the European Union to become the troop, a military base, a game board at the service of this decadent empire that is endangering the very existence of the planet.	N/A

		Ukraine (debate)							into open conflict using Europe as their game board. And I speak in the past tense because the United States and its military arm, NATO, have run out of arguments, but they have never really needed them to start their wars. Mr. Borrell, we have many differences, but that does not prevent me from considering you a man of peace who seeks to resolve conflicts through political means.		
Mick Wallace	16th Feb. 2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)	No	The Left	Ireland and	Ethos & Logos against EU involve ment	NATO Disengage ment		This has reached such a pitch that when Ukraine begs to the US and NATO to stop creating hysteria and provide some proof for the supposedly imminent any day now Russian invasion. Ukraine is ignored by the forces that pretend to protect them. NATO's raison d'être is protecting Western corporate interests and the interests of the military industrial complex. But it looks like now they're also protecting the interest of US gas and oil. The warmongering of NATO and the US these past few months has done nothing for peace in Europe, and the role played by NATO think tanks	People who want peace in Europe should be calling for NATO to be abolished.	NATO, US, UK war; economic interests

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like the Atlantic Council was not good.

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Marc Botenga	16th February 2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)	No	The Left	Belgium	Ethos & Logos against EU involvement	deescalation, NATO disengagement, anti-Economic Integration	de-escalation is needed in Ukraine and, as always in diplomacy, this means negotiating with very unpleasant people, such as Vladimir Putin. But Charles Michel just called here to mobilize hundreds of millions to integrate Ukraine into the Western or European sphere of influence. He received support from the nationalist right to the Greens. The Greens have clearly forgotten that they ever came from the peace movement. But imagine for a moment what would happen if China or Russia soon mobilized hundreds of millions, billions to bring Mexico into its sphere of influence. How would the United States react? Think about that for a second.	At the time, Europe realized that. Until recently, we realized that the neutrality of Austria or Finland was important. Today you have forgotten those lessons. You want to integrate Ukraine into NATO and that leads to conflict. Negotiate. Stop expanding NATO. Negotiate and create a common architecture for peace in Europe.	US, NATO war; economic interests
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Manu Pineda	7th June 2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine (debate)	Yes	The Left	Spain	Ethos against EU involvement	Against general economic sanctions, welcoming of Refugees, negotiation with UN	After decades of pressure and harassment policies against Russia by the United States and NATO, using the European Union as a tool at the service of these objectives, we have reached a scenario that everyone says they do not want, but with which some dreamed. European Union build peace instead of encouraging wars	The sanctions policy of the European Union is hypocritical. As an example: we bought the same Russian oil, but now we pay a premium because we bought it from India instead of Russia. We propose that, in the face of conflicts, instead of fueling the escalation, the European Union works to resolve them. It must collaborate with the United Nations in the search for diplomatic and political solutions. We propose that the European Union protect refugees, regardless of their passport, and that it defend freedom of opinion and information.	EU encourages war
Marc Boteng	7th June 2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion of	No	The Left	Belgium	Pathos against EU involvement	Anti general economic sanction	When Russia attacks Ukraine, Europe sanctions, of course. But when the United States bombs Iraq, no sanctions, when Saudi Arabia bombs Yemen, no sanctions, when we, the European Union, bomb and destroy Libya, no sanctions, and when Israel is colonizing	they blame you for the negative impact of sanctions on workers all over the world, and, finally, they blame Europe for the "double standard"	N/A

		Ukraine (debate)							Palestine, no sanctions. It's two weights, two measures. according to you, the Africans have understood nothing, the Indians are picking up the slack and the Chinese are not talking about it! What you want to vote for is a text which, in fact, infantilizes half the world.	
Clare Daly	18th October 2022	Recognising the Russian Federation as a state sponsor of terrorism	Yes	The Left	Ireland and	Ethos & Logos against EU involvement	against recognizing Russia as a state sponsors terrorism, Peace Processes	So if you want to start naming state sponsors of terrorism, let's do it: European sponsorship of Israeli terrorism in Palestine; Western sponsorship of Saudi terror in Yemen; ISIS, the product of French, American, British, Turkish and Gulf sponsorship in Syria and Iraq; decades of right-wing, US-backed terrorism against the Cuban Revolution; the Contras in Nicaragua; death squads in Guatemala, in El Salvador. Remember Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia: horror after horror, terror after terror.	And all it will do is make peace harder to achieve – exactly, of course, what the extremists want: no peace, no off-ramps, all bridges burning and Ukraine a permanent abattoir in a suicidal holy crusade against Russia.	Russia is not a terrorist state
Mick Wallace	18th October 2022	Recognising the Russian Federation as a state	No	The Left	Ireland and	Ethos & Logos EU	Recognizing NATO, US, Israel,	Russia drops bombs on built-up areas in Ukraine, I have no doubt that the people in Ukraine underneath the bombs are	When Russia drops bombs on built-up areas in Ukraine, I have no doubt that the people in Ukraine underneath the bombs are	Russia uses form of terrorism

		sponsor of terrorism				involve ment	UK, France as terrorist state	terrorised. It's a form of terrorism.	terrorised. It's a form of terrorism. When the US and NATO bombed Afghanistan for 20 years and killed several hundred thousand and displaced millions, they were terrorizing the people. {...} When France and the UK and others armed the Saudis and the UAE to commit genocide in Yemen, where the UN said that over 400 000 are dead and 16 million are starving because of a genocide being carried out with the support of the US, the UK, France and several European states, is that terrorism? When are ye going to wake up and start living in the real world?	but it is a political
Özlem Demir el	15th February 2022	One year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine	No	The Left	Germany	Ethos against EU involvement	Peace Processes	But what has NATO been doing since then, apart from arming itself in real and verbal terms? Stop it! Why were you silent when Britain and the US torpedoed the peace talks in Turkey last year?	Really show solidarity with the people of Ukraine and stop putting your geopolitical interests above people's lives!	N/A

Nikola j Villum sen	16 Febr uary 2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)	No	The Left	De nm ark	Logos pro EU involve ment	Econo mic Support (energ etic, Individ ual) Energe tic support	Putin takes advantage of EU countries' dependence on Russian gas. If we want to be able to speak out against Putin	If we want to be able to speak out against Putin, it is crucial that we strengthen the green transition and make ourselves independent of fossil fuels. And Mr. Borrell, let's put Putin and the oligarchs at the door and stop Nord Stream 2 once and for all!	Russian war
Manon Aubry	6th June 2022	Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022:	Yes	The Left	Fra nce	Pathos pro EU involve ment	Legal Action against Putin, Econo mic sanctio ns against individ ual, Financ ial Support (cancel Ukrain e debt), Energe	I say it here with seriousness: this situation has a person responsible, Vladimir Putin, who will have to pay for all these war crimes, for the rapes used as a weapon of war, for the carnage of Irpin, the destruction of Mariupol , for the Boutcha mass graves. Let us rise to the occasion, according to the one and only compass that must guide our mandate: humanism, peace and the protection of peoples.	we have to hit these oligarchs even more in the wallet. Only then can we weaken him enough to force him to negotiate. And for that, you don't have to take a yacht, but all yachts. You don't have to take a villa, but all the villas. We must not take a few millions, but all the billions. The Ukrainian people cannot be condemned to the sufferings of austerity and structural adjustments, which are added to those of the war. We must also make a clear commitment, without conditions: let's	Putin's war

							tic Protect ion		cancel the Ukrainian debt! And rather than replacing one polluting energy with another, let us finally accelerate the development of renewable energies, the only guarantee of our energy independence.	
Nikola j Villum sen	04/05 /2022	The social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine - reinforcing the EU's capacity to act (debate)	No	The Left	De nm ark	Ethos Pro EU involve ment	Individ ual Econo mic Sancti ons	The war in Ukraine is deeply appealing. We must do everything to stop it.	It must hit Putin and the oligarchs where it hurts.	N/A
Silvia Modig	06/04 /2022	Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022:	No	The Left	Finl and	Pathos & Ethos pro EU involve ment	Econo mic sanctio ns against individ uals, exclusi on from	Russia's cruel and illegal war against Ukraine must be condemned and the news of the last few days about Russian atrocities must be thoroughly and independently investigated and the culprits must be brought before the International War Crimes Tribunal. At stake is not only the future of Ukrainians,	In addition to this, all Russian banks must be suspended from the Swift system. It is completely unsustainable that we finance Putin's war machine with energy purchases. Now that it is finally clear to everyone that we must break away	N/A

							SWIFT, Energetic transition	but of all of us. It is about the right of every independent country to freely decide on its own future	from Russian fossil energy in a quick schedule, it is important to understand that we must break away from fossil energy at the same time.	
Marc Botenga	06/04 /2022	Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022:	No	The Left	Belgium	Logos Pro EU Involvement	Economic Sanctions against Individuals	You prefer sanctions that hit the working class, in Russia and in Europe. But sanctioning the population does not end the wars of their leaders.	We are also tabling amendments for stricter and targeted sanctions against the Russian oligarchs. They directly support the war. Through a global financial registry, we can prevent these billionaires from circumventing sanctions by moving their yacht to the Maldives or temporarily transferring their wealth to a family member or friend.	Criminal war

**Table 4.**

*Coding Frame: Identity and Democracy rhetorical approach and objectives*

Claimant	Date	Topic of the session	On behalf of their political group	Political Party	Country of Origin	Rhetorical Approach	Object of the claim	Quote: Justification	Quote: Object	Framing
Harald Vilimsky	16/02/2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)	No	ID	Austrian	Ethos against EU involvement	Third Way, NATO Disengagement, Peace Process	Ladies and gentlemen, when we are discussing the Ukraine-Russia issue today, I think it would also be helpful to go back to the year 2003 - the year 2003, when the then US President Bush, the then US Secretary of Defense Powell and British Prime Minister Blair lied to the world public and pushed them into the Iraq war. Let's also think back to the year 2014 after the Maidan, when Ukraine was reorganized and the son of then US Vice President Biden, namely Hunter Biden, was hoisted onto the supervisory board of Burisma, one of the largest Ukrainian energy companies, and the American Jaresko, I think, had her citizenship changed in an express procedure and on the same	From my point of view, it would be helpful to resolve this conflict without the involvement of the Americans. I propose a tripolar conference between the Europeans, the Russians and the Ukrainians to ensure lasting peace here and no longer make us the plaything of geopolitical financial interests.	US war; economic interests

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evening she was Ukrainian and became Minister of Finance.

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Bernhard Zimniok	16/0 2/20 22	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)	No	ID	Ger many	Logos against EU involvem ent	NATO disenga gement, Anti Econom ic Sanction s	Let's just imagine Canada joining an alliance with Russia. The United States would certainly be very happy about that. These facts show one thing very clearly: NATO has been gradually moving towards Russia for decades and not the other way around. I therefore reject a unilateral condemnation of Russia.	In order to improve the situation in the long term, however, various steps are necessary. First, a guarantee is needed from Ukraine that it will definitely not join NATO. As the well-known American political scientist John Mearsheimer put it: No great power wants to have another great power as a neighbor. There must also be no new sanctions against Russia. Instead, the existing sanctions should be withdrawn in the future in order to reduce these unnecessary tensions.	NATO war
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								<p>The sanctions are completely meaningless and actually only harm us. The massive increase in energy prices in Germany in particular is ensuring that the already enormously high costs of the completely misguided energy transition are significantly higher. At the same time, the sanctions not only ensure that support for Putin is stronger than ever among both the population and the oligarchs. And according to CNN and Bloomberg, Russia is now making even more money from commodities than before the war. More death and destruction and nothing else. The Ukrainian citizens are the victims of a Russian war of aggression, which has been unnecessarily prolonged and escalated by the measures taken by the West. We must face the facts: we simply cannot defeat Russia as a nuclear power. Nor can we corner it so far that incalculable measures are taken and the situation is further aggravated. For me, Russia and Ukraine are two</p>		
Bernhard Zimniok	07/06/2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine (debate)	No	ID	Germany	Logos & Ethos against EU involvement	anti Economic Sanctions, anti Military Exports		<p>According to Interpol, the arms deliveries threaten to pose a threat to us too. US weapons from Ukraine are already being sold on the Darknet. Those who support these absurd sanctions harm our citizens and empower</p>	EU prolongs the war, Ukraine and Russia two sides of a same coin

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								sides of the same coin. I don't take away my right and left hand. These are both corrupt states. Look at the Corruption Index!			
Thierry Mariani	07/06/2022	The EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after the Russian invasion of Ukraine (debate)	Yes	ID	France	Ethos & Pathos against EU involvement	Against Intro QMV, against EU common Security, against Economic Sanctions	You practice a real shock strategy by exploiting the legitimate emotion of the war in Ukraine. Mr President, as was the case with the COVID crisis, the European Union and Mrs Loiseau, spokesperson for Emmanuel Macron in this Parliament, are using the war in Ukraine to create a super-European State. You now want to impose a diktat from Brussels on our defense industry.	You are making us run extreme risks by yielding to all the injunctions of the Ukrainian president, who is now coming to lecture in Paris or lecture in Berlin.	I think you are dragging us into an economic and geopolitical catastrophe through a policy of sanctions that no one wants to follow outside the West.	Brussels dictatorship
Anna Bonfrisco	15/02/2023	One year of Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine	No	ID	Italy	Ethos & Pathos pro EU involvement	Increase defense spending	We cannot allow the use of force to annex territories of other states; we cannot allow the return of imperialism and colonization; we cannot remain indifferent while the	Our role as parliamentarians, therefore, today lies in guaranteeing correct information to our citizens, in guaranteeing consent to the increase in		Russian Imperial war

								civilian population is slaughtered.	defense spending of our sovereign states and of the West.	
Peter Kofod	16/02/2022	EU-Russia relations, European security and Russia's military threat against Ukraine (debate)	No	ID	Denmark	Ethos & Logos pro EU involvement	Energetic Sanction, NATO Support	I think the most important thing for Europe's security and defense is our alliance with the Americans and with the British. It is our cooperation under NATO auspices that I would very much like to see prioritized, but it is of course a task that lies at home in our own countries to take care of it. But where would Europe have been today if it hadn't been for the Americans, and if it hadn't been for the British? That alliance is so important, and in this situation actually more important perhaps than ever before.	I also have to say that it surprises me that in Germany people have got the idea that you can separate energy policy from other political areas. That you think you can talk about energy on the one hand, and that it has no influence on security policy and on foreign policy, because of course it does.	Russian war
Jaak Madison	06/04/2022	Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022: including the latest development	No	ID	Estonia	Pathos pro EU involvement	Economic Sanctions	First of all, I know that it's so shocking to see in the media about those mass murders, about those rapes, about those crimes, what's happening in Ukraine. But what I do not understand is that we are also surprised that it is possible in the 21st century. Unfortunately, it is possible,	The problem is that the expectation for this year is that the profit will be EUR 321 billion for Russia for gas and oil. So if we're going to talk about sanctions, it has to be really effective. And,	Russian war of aggression



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against  
Ukraine

be too pro-Russian.  
Act now, fight now  
and win this war.

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