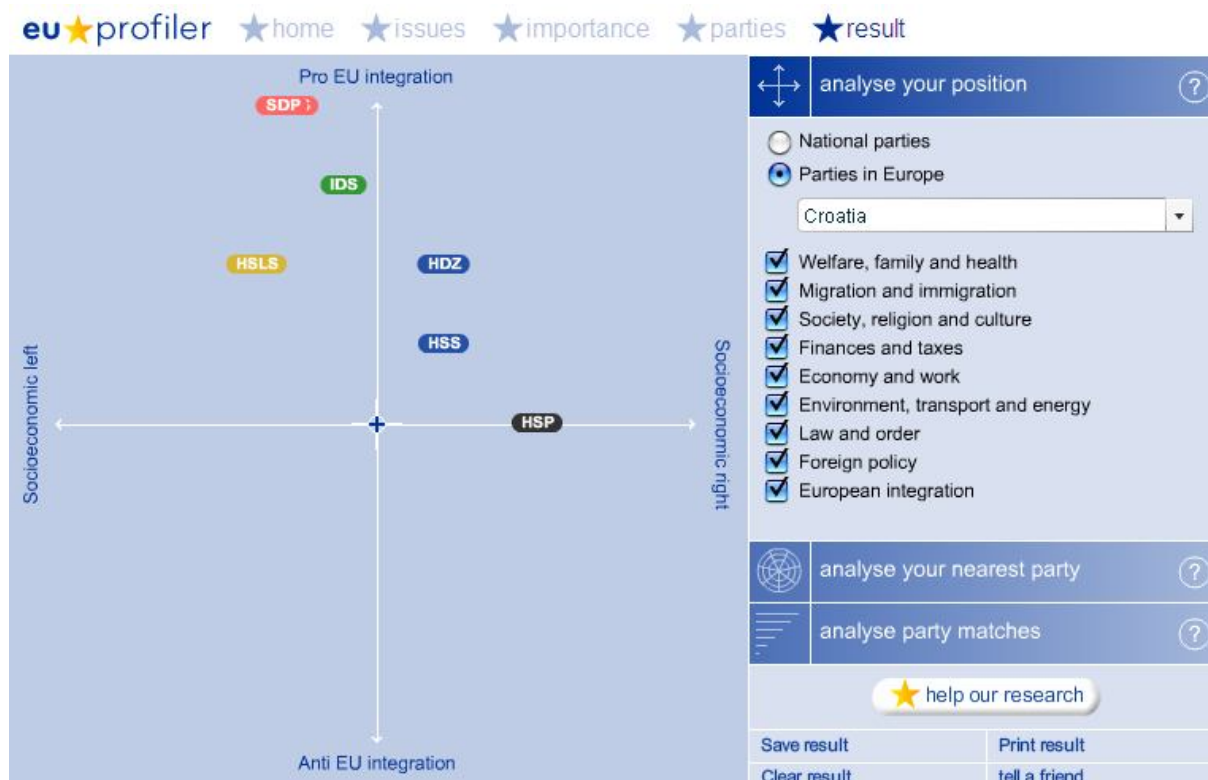


THE CROATIAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE¹



The Croatian spectrum of the EU Profiler contains seven political parties, all of which are represented in the national parliament. Considering that Croatia, which is still an EU Candidate Country, will not take part in the European Parliamentary election in June 2009, the selection of the parties had to take place according to criteria other than parties' registration for these particular elections. Although all Croatian parliamentary parties were contacted and asked to self-place themselves in the EU Profiler questionnaire and provide documents and links that could support their positions, the parties' response rate was very low. Therefore, we decide to code only the largest parliamentary parties and some smaller parties for which documents (political programs and manifestos, speeches, etc) were relatively available.

Nevertheless, even in the case of the seven selected parties, it was not possible to code the parties on all the statements, especially on those dealing with EU-related issues. Not being yet part of the EU and not having manifestos for the EU Parliamentary Elections, most Croatian parties have never expressed their positions on many aspects of the EU integration process. Most of the parties, however, had documented positions on the general desirability of the EU

¹ This graphic and its description are based on the so-called 'political landscape' of the voting advice application EU Profiler. For positioning the parties, the EU Profiler academic team extensively researched the manifestos and other sources of the covered parties and positioned them on the statements of the EU Profiler. For more details on the EU Profiler and its methodology, please visit www.euprofiler.eu or contact Dr. Fabian Breuer (Fabian.Breuer@eui.eu).

integration process and the Croatian EU membership prospect. Therefore, almost all parties are positioned relatively high on the vertical axis, i.e. pro EU integration. Only the Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) is positioned neutral on the issue of European integration. This shows the broad consensus among the political elite towards Croatian EU membership.

On the socioeconomic Left-Right dimension, there are four left wing parties (the liberal Croatian People's Party- Liberal Democrats - HNS, and the Croatian Social Liberal Party - HSLS, the Social Democratic Party of Croatia -SDP and the regionalist Istrian Democratic Assembly - IDS), two centre-right parties (the ruling Croatian Democratic Union - HDZ and the Croatian Peasant Party - HSS and one right-wing party, the Croatian Party of Rights - HSP) . Interestingly, the two major opposition parties, SDP and HNS occupy exactly the same position in the political landscape, representing centre-left socioeconomic orientation, and very strong pro-EU attitude.

What emerges as the overall picture is a rather narrow spectrum of political positions occupied by major Croatian political parties. Consensus is apparent not only on the matter of EU integration, but also on the socio-economic dimension, with almost all parties located in the centre. The only clearly right-wing party is HSP, while on the programmatic level, the most left-wing one is HSLS, which, however, is currently a member of the incumbent coalition with centre-right HDZ and HSS.

Where Croatian political parties display largest differences is certainly on the issues related to liberal society, where there is a clear divide between social conservative HSS, HDZ, and HSP and more social liberal SDP, HNS, HSLS and IDS.