**The Contemporary European Social Democracy: Downfall and Resilience as Reflected by the Romanian (PSD) and Dutch (PvdA) Center-Left**

After 2010, the European Socialist political family experienced a profound crisis. Several of its members were affected by a severe electoral decline. Voices from the academic field argued that the response of Social Democratic cabinets to the economic downturn of that period was the main reason behind the downfall. This process, described as *Pasokification* because of the role of the austerity policies in the ruination of Greek Socialism, was indeed fueled by the financial and economic crisis that started in 2007-2008. However, its roots run deeper in recent history, and its effects are visible several years after the recession ended. Moreover, some parties crossed this turmoil unscathed, and others rebounded quickly, proving their resilience. Geographically, we can identify some strongholds of the Left, like Scandinavia or the Mediterranean countries. In other areas, the position of the Social Democrats is more ambiguous.

What are the main causes of this decline? Why some parties were able to move beyond it, while others never recovered? The present paper tries to shape some answers to these questions, by focusing on the electoral and organizational evolution in the last 10-15 years of two members of the Party of European Socialists (PES): the Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA). Firstly, we determine the degree to which the PSD and the PvdA were damaged by the above-mentioned crisis. Secondly, we present and categorize information that helps us understand the reasons behind the differences we identified. We base our analysis on a theoretical background that argues that there are four types of explanations for the current situation of the European center-left: sociological, materialist, ideational, and institutional. Our conclusions emphasize the main factors that are relevant to our topic and suggest possible recipes for a Social Democratic revival.

Keywords: Social Democracy, ideology, European politics, Romania, the Netherlands.