

## **Abstract**

The thesis entitled Irish political parties and the evolution of their positions towards the EU deals with an overlooked issue in our context, which is related to the attitude of political parties in Ireland and their relationship with the EU, and the author has defined the period of her analysis as 2002-2020. The first part of the thesis introduces the theoretical concept of Euroscepticism through the most influential theoretical contributions of authors such as Paul Taggart, Aleks Szczerbiak, Petr Kopecký, Cas Mudde, and Soren Rishoj. Also, it discusses the degree of Europeanisation of the Irish political system or political parties themselves. The next part of the thesis then discusses the formation of the Irish political and party system, referred to as the so-called two-and-a-half party system with two dominant political parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, and analyses the other political actors. The thesis is a longitudinal analysis building on data collected from the Comparative Manifesto Project, Chapel Hill Expert Survey. The author has supplemented this data with her 2020 election dataset and presents it in detail in the methodology section. The data analysis was carried out in R using Wordscores and TF-IDF, designed to answer three research questions for the content analysis of party manifestos. Which political parties can we observe the biggest shift over the years? What best explains this shift?