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ASA 2017: OVERCOMING EUROPEAN DIVIDES
Building bridges of dialogue in times of polarisation

Felipe Basabe Llorens
(External ASA Coordinator)

Michael M. Thoss
(Managing Director, Allianz Cultural Foundation)
The Allianz Summer Academy (ASA) “Overcoming European divides” was held near Munich in summer 2017 at a paradoxical moment in the process of European integration.

A large member state is exiting the union for the first time, yet the main actors of the club are eager to exhibit shared optimism. The press has even spoken of renewed “European momentum”, with populist movements apparently receding from the public sphere. On the other hand, European societies have never seemed as polarised along political, social and identity lines. So are member states with regard to the EU’s democratic values and migration issues or the social aftermath of the 2007/8 economic crisis.

According to a medieval proverb, “The arrow flies higher when the bow is tense.” And indeed this European tension—in its multiple dimensions and perceived windows of opportunity—was felt and analysed by the participants of our academy. Everyone agreed that the EU should take advantage of this historic moment to become stronger, reinforce its institutions and procedures, redefine its future, and defend its values. Younger generations demand their say in European public debate.

Under the title “Orbán, Putin, Trump: How can the EU defend its values?”, keynote speaker Rebecca Harms, member of the European Parliament in the Greens/EFA Group and former president of the group from 2009–2016, gave an inspiring and passionate introduction to our academy, focusing on the present relevance and vulnerability of so-called European values. All European societies and their individual citizens share the collective endeavour toward the good life—*das gute Leben*—as even the founding fathers of the European Community had envisioned a progressive increase of living standards in all member states as a long-term goal. However, the fact that prosperity alone is not a sufficient basis for a common understanding of EU values has become ever more apparent through nationalist-populist identity discourses currently splitting European civil society. A specific example is the Orbán government’s defamatory attack on the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest; CEU’s students participated again this summer, marking the university’s fourth year at the ASA. The new Hungarian Higher Education Act—a true Lex CEU—codifies the resentments of nationalist groups toward cosmopolitan, educated elites accused of betraying the cultural identity of their own people as agents of either the EU or international financial capital networks. For this reason the Alumni Council of the ASA network—now encompassing over 200 members—composed a letter of solidarity addressed to the university’s Director and President Michael Ignatieff.

Alongside the CEU students, young scholars from Uppsala Universitet in Sweden, Università Bocconi in Milan, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and St. Kliment Ohridski University in Sofia presented the results of their policy reports prepared throughout the previous academic year.

The thematic framework for our ASA 2017 developed cooperatively between the five participating universities and the Allianz Cultural Foundation. It soon became obvious that the current polarisation and fragmentation of our respective European societies had to be assessed from a multidisciplinary perspective, taking into account political, social, economic, security and generational divides. Their analyses and conclusions on the political explanations for euroscepticism; the fight against poverty and the perspectives
for a collective European social security strategy; the relevance of unemployment for the future of European societies; the patterns of cooperation and division in the fight against terrorism at the European level and the reconciliation of generational perceptions for the revival of the European project are reflected in this issue.

The ASA, one of the flagship programs of the Allianz Cultural Foundation, enters its 14th year of existence and intends to broaden the dialogue between academia and civil society at the European level and foster the civic participation of younger generations. Again we invited a wide spectrum of European NGOs working in their respective fields to perform a “reality check” on the students’ academic conclusions: Democracy International e.V., the German Caritas Association (Deutscher Caritasverband e.V.), Italy’s Basic Income Network Italia, the French League of Human Rights (Ligue des droits de l’Homme), the Red House Centre for Culture and Debate as well as Citizens for Europe and its network of associated organisations. The interaction and dialogue between young scholars at prestigious universities and practitioners from civil society has time and time again proven mutually enriching and thought provoking.

During the plenary session the academy’s process of open dialogue and communal learning led to the creation of cross-national discussion groups seeking answers to challenging topics derived from the students’ original work: from the protection of European shared values to how to create trust in the European Union, from the reinvention of democracy in Europe to how to make Europe more inclusive and foster greater participation from European civil society. In this context the issues surrounding the content and definition of European shared values and the need to protect them through education, debate and inclusion (in their gender, economic, educational and regional dimensions) stimulated particularly intense and fruitful discussions within the workshops.

The academy ended its debate process with the provisional drafting of conclusions shared by all participants in plenum. These draft conclusions consisted of a series of policy recommendations to combat the lack of understanding of the European Union, and its values, institutions and benefits among its citizens, as well as to foster debate in civil society and enhance citizen participation in the public sphere.

Each ASA creates its own atmosphere and dynamics, and 2017’s participants confronted the severity and complexity of the challenges ahead particularly well. Once again it must be stated that the academy’s purpose is to focus not only on concrete results, but above all on the process itself—a process mirroring the European culture of active dialogue.

As one of the participants put it, “Considering the current political events in Europe, I think it is important to have a positive and constructive outlook on the future.... We see fracturing within so many EU policy areas that the future will necessarily be about bridging.” May the insights in this year’s publication help Europe overcome its divisions, resulting in a stronger union better reflecting the aspirations and needs of both its member states and its citizens.
The EU political divide — what explains euroscepticism?

Authors
Nora Anter
Oscar Appelkvist
August Danielson
Freija Haas
Anna Svensson

Supervisor
Assoc. Prof. Thomas Persson
This paper identifies and assesses eurosceptic party positions toward the EU. Through a regression analysis of four factors—perception of democratic deficit, unfavourable economic policies, threats to national sovereignty and threats to national identity—we find that each factor contributes to euroscepticism, albeit to varying degrees. In other words, in order to combat rising euroscepticism, all such root causes must be addressed. We propose easing citizens’ concerns over how cosmopolitan societies can and will function, how the transfer of power to an EU level affects legitimacy and how the EU should redistribute wealth in sustainable ways across member-state borders.

In 2014 more voters than ever cast their votes for eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament elections. There are now a record number of candidates from eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament and criticism toward the European Union is stronger than ever before (Trieb 2014: 1541). Since the 2014 election, eurosceptic parties have been able to use the refugee crisis and anti-immigrant sentiments as well as continuous economic troubles to further strengthen their position. Their biggest success so far is arguably the forthcoming secession of one of the union’s largest member states, the United Kingdom. There is a severe political divide between the pro-European and eurosceptic parties, who advocate for radical EU reforms, secession from the union or even the dismantling the European integration project altogether. For those who want to secure the future of the EU, it is crucial to understand the factors driving eurosceptic parties.

In the public debate, euroscepticism is often portrayed as a single uniform concept, implying that the motives behind support for eurosceptic parties in Europe are largely the same. However, research on euroscepticism has identified that eurosceptic parties differ widely in their critiques of the EU and that popular support for euroscepticism has been gained on different grounds. The aim of this paper is to make an empirical assessment of the different factors driving eurosceptic parties. More specifically, the study is focused around four root causes of the euroscepticism of eurosceptic parties: 1) perceptions of a democratic deficit; 2) unfavourable economic policies; 3) threats to national sovereignty; and 4) threats to national identity (Bertoncini & Koenig 2014). These four causes, proposed by Bertoncini and Koenig of the Jacques Delors Institute, go hand in hand with some of the key arguments of eurosceptic parties—for instance, reducing member state contributions and immigration to the EU and “taking back” political control from Brussels.

These four possible causes of euroscepticism will be tested in a quantitative study using data from the Chapel Hill expert survey (Polk, Rovny, Bakker, Edwards, Hooghe, Jolly, Koedam, Kostelka, Marks, Schumacher, Steenbergen, Vachudova & Zilovic 2017) through both bivariate and multivariate regression analyses. In the CHES dataset, the variable ‘EU_position’ has been chosen as an indicator of euroscepticism. It is “the overall orientation of the party leadership towards European integration in 2014”, measured from 1 (strongly opposed) to 7 (strongly in favour), where 4 is neutral (Polk et al. 2017). This question captures the parties’ general view of the EU and European integration and is therefore suitable as an indicator of euroscepticism in general. In this analysis, we only
include parties with a score below 4.0 for ‘EU_position’. In line with Meijers (2017: 4), we argue that these should be considered eurosceptic.

In summary, this analysis aims to contribute to the ongoing research on the drivers of eurosceptic parties’ positions toward the EU. An understanding of the causes behind euroscepticism is a crucial first step in the process of working against it and overcoming the political divide within the union.

THE ROOT CAUSES OF EUROSCETICISM

Democracy

The first root of euroscepticism that Bertoncini and Koenig identify is centred around democracy. Widely criticised are the EU’s democratic deficit, its perceived lack of transparency and its costly, elitist, technocratic bureaucracy. This critique has normative connotations aimed at the political and democratic legitimacy of the union (Bertoncini et al 2014: 5). Often used in populist ideology and rhetoric, the notion of the EU as “controlled by a mostly technocratic elite and lacking the legitimacy conferred by universal suffrage” is put forward together with calls for a more democratic Europe closer to the “interests of the people” (Surel 2011: 4).

National sovereignty

The second root is national sovereignty. Here the transfer of power from the member states to the EU is perceived as a loss of sovereignty rather than a mechanism for “pooling and sharing”. It calls for complete or partial return of competences and power to the national level and is fed by “compliance costs” that can come with the implementation of EU laws and regulations (Bertoncini et al 2014: 5). It is closely linked to the first root, but puts emphasis on the notion of the EU as an “exogenous political system”, threatening the sovereignty of the nation and limiting the will of its people (Surel 2011: 4). This root has gained in importance with the sovereign debt crisis, the creation of the Troika and the reform of Economic and Monetary Union granting the EU greater influence over member state economic policy (Bertoncini et al 2014: 5).

Economy

The third root of euroscepticism that Bertoncini and Koenig identify is economic. This dimension can essentially be summed up in two political views: the left and the right. The radical left eurosceptics argue that the policy-making logic and institutions of the EU are “ideologically biased toward market-liberal policies” and as such exacerbate economic inequalities. These critics believe that the institutional structure of the EU has led to an asymmetry that favours “market-making” over “market-regulation”, leading to an increase in austerity policies as well as wage cuts and rising unemployment (Meijers 2017: 6). The radical left points to the lack of common European social policies as a clear sign of this asymmetry.
The second view consists mostly of right-wing eurosceptics who oppose financial solidarity with poorer member states. Since the 1984 quarrel over the European Commission budget led by UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, a common debate within member states, especially among the strongest net contributors to the EU budget, has been whether the costs of EU membership offset the benefits. The EU structural and investment funds that aim to support regional economic development across (mostly poorer) EU countries is one such debated topic.

**National identity**

Bertoncini and Koenig’s fourth root of euroscepticism is national identity, focusing on the effect of increased migration on ethnic homogeneity. This dimension is strongly linked to the defence of the national community and culture against foreigners, mainly through strong opposition to immigration. Based on these arguments, right-wing parties oppose European integration in an “effort to construct an idea of nation and national belonging by radicalising ethnic, religious, cultural and political criteria of exclusion” (Minkenberg 2002: 337). The end goal of this increased nationalism is minimising the ethnic, religious and cultural heterogeneity within their nation. Another aspect of this dimension is its critique of immigration based on increasing welfare costs. Bertoncini and Koenig describe this as “welfare populism”, driven by the fear that immigrants will “abuse and hollow out national social systems” (Bertoncini & Koenig 2014: 6).

We operationalise these four roots into five different variables in the CHES dataset which we will then briefly discuss in the coming section. The definitions of the variables are available in the 2015 CHES Codebook (Polk et al. 2017).

**BIVARIATE REGRESSIONS**

**Democracy**

The first root cause of euroscepticism, democracy, is operationalised through the variable ‘antielite_salience’. Bertoncini and Koenig contend that this root cause of euroscepticism is mainly driven by the notion that the EU is undemocratic and controlled by a technocratic bureaucracy. On this basis, we should expect eurosceptic parties’ position toward the EU to be negatively correlated with the salience of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric—i.e., the more eurosceptic a party is, the more importance the party will put on anti-elite rhetoric toward the EU. To test this, we conduct a bivariate regression analysis on the relationship between the variables ‘EU_position’ and ‘antielite_salience’.

The results of the bivariate regression analysis support our hypothesis. The b-coefficient between the two variables is -0.162, indicating that for every increase by one in ‘antielite_salience’, our dependent variable (‘EU_position’) decreases by 0.162. In other words, the greater the anti-elite rhetoric, the more negative a eurosceptic party is toward the EU. This relationship is statistically significant on a 0.001 significance level. One
interesting outlier is the German party representing the left-wing party Die Linke (The Left). While it is one of the most anti-elite parties in the EU, it is more or less indifferent to the EU. This indicates that a eurosceptic party’s anti-elite rhetoric can stem from both political inequality as well as economic inequality.

Figure 1. Correlation of EU position and salience of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric among eurosceptic parties (Polk et al. 2017)

**National sovereignty**

The second root cause identified by Bertoncini and Koenig is national sovereignty. We operationalise this through the variable ‘EU_budgets’, as it reflects the party’s will to transfer authority over economic and budgetary policies to the EU. We expect that a party that is more critical of EU oversight of national budgets would also be more critical of the EU in general. The bivariate analysis supports this hypothesis. There is a strong positive correlation between ‘EU_budgets’ and ‘EU_position’. The b-coefficient (1.044) is also statistically significant on a 0.001 significance level. The model thus shows that if a eurosceptic political party prefers budget controls, they are most likely positive toward the EU. This seems like a plausible relationship as budget control has become a symbol of supranationalism and is described as circumscribing national sovereignty. The introduction of budget controls can thus be seen as a dividing line between political parties preferring more European integration and those preferring less.

**Economy**

We operationalise the third root cause of euroscepticism in two variables, each reflecting a different aspect of the root cause. While eurosceptic parties on the political left oppose the internal market as they believe it only exacerbates economic inequalities both within
and between member states, many right-wing eurosceptic parties also criticise the EU for costing too much, for instance through financial solidarity and structural investment funds to poorer member states. These two viewpoints are summarised in the variables ‘EU_intmark’ and ‘EU_cohesion’. Bivariate regression analyses of these two variables on the dependent variable support both hypotheses. The b-coefficients of both analyses (0.431 and 0.389) shows that there is a positive relationship between the two independent variables and ‘EU_position’—i.e., for every increase by one in a party’s position to the internal market or cohesion policies, the degree of support for the EU also increases. Both of these analyses are also statistically significant on a 0.001 significance level.

**National identity**

The last root cause of euroscepticism that Bertoncini and Koenig identify is national identity. While many viable options for the operationalisation of this eurosceptic dimension exist, we have opted to use the variable nationalism. Based on Bertoncini and Koenig’s definition of this root, we expect a party’s position toward nationalism to be negatively correlated with ‘EU_position’—i.e., the stronger the party promotes nationalist conceptions of society, the more critical the party is toward the EU. The bivariate regression analysis of nationalism on ‘EU_position’ supports this hypothesis. The b-coefficient of the regression is -0.113, showing that there is a slight yet significant effect of a party’s position on nationalism on their overall position toward the EU.

Figure 2. Correlation of EU position and three root causes of euroscepticism among eurosceptic parties (Polk et al. 2017)
MULTIVARIATE REGRESSIONS

In this section, the analysis is focused on multivariate regressions. In Table 1 below, Model 1 (combined) is a multivariate regression in which the variables connected to the respective roots are included in the same regression. In other words, we control the roots against one another. In Models 2 (control) and 3 (full model), additional controls have been included.

When controlling for the other roots in Model 1, the relationship between the parties’ views on the internal market and the ‘EU_position’ becomes weaker and ceases to be statistically significant. The rest of the correlations are as expected weaker than in their respective bivariate regressions; however, they remain statistically significant. Of these correlations, democracy, measured as ‘antielite_salience’, shows the biggest drop in strength. In Model 2, we control for the extent to which the parties perceive that they benefit from the EU: ‘EU_benefit’, a variable from the CHES dataset. In this model, the correlation between the democracy root and ‘EU_position’ also ceases to be statistically significant. In Model 3, we add additional controls to the regression. These include GDP per capita, citizens’ position toward the EU (the proportion of voters who view the EU as “mainly a bad thing” for their country), a measurement of the quality of government and whether the party comes from a country that is a new member state of the EU. The estimates do not change significantly from Model 2. In other words, after controlling for all roots, ‘EU_benefit’ as well as additional controls, we reject the democracy root (measured as ‘antielite_salience’) and the leftist aspect of the economic root (measured as critique toward the internal market) as the main driving factors of eurosceptic parties’ positions toward the EU.

### Table 1. Multivariate regression analysis of root causes of euroscepticism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Combined b/se</th>
<th>Control b/se</th>
<th>Full model b/se</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(mean) nationalism</td>
<td>-0.076***</td>
<td>-0.069***</td>
<td>-0.069**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mean) EU_intmark</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mean) EU_cohesion</td>
<td>0.225***</td>
<td>0.178***</td>
<td>0.164**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mean) EU_budgets</td>
<td>0.404***</td>
<td>0.405***</td>
<td>0.442**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mean) antielite_s-a-e</td>
<td>-0.064*</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(mean) EU_benefit</td>
<td>-0.571***</td>
<td>-0.626**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QOG</td>
<td>-0.109</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen_EU_pos</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New_M5</td>
<td>-0.030</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constant</td>
<td>1.220**</td>
<td>3.073***</td>
<td>3.025**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.37)</td>
<td>(0.76)</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

r2_e        | 0.739         | 0.762        | 0.768           |
df_e        | 67.080        | 66.000       | 60.000          |
bic         | 110.267       | 106.651      | 105.264         |

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001
In general, the multivariate regression shows that the root causes that were hypothesised to be the main factors of euroscepticism continue to be reasonable explanations of euroscepticism. However, not all root causes remain statistically significant. As stated, the effect of the position on the internal market on ‘EU_position’ decreases and ceases to be statistically significant when controlling for the other root causes. One potential explanation for this result is that the critique toward the internal market might essentially be a nationalist critique of the perceived threat of the internal market. In the wake of the European single market, political and economic deregulations have in some cases harmed established national businesses. Accordingly, if the internal market leads national businesses to be driven out of competition by companies from other member states, the critique toward the internal market may be highly correlated with, and partly explained by, the national identity root cause.

"We argue that the dual processes of European legal and economic integration are weakening [...] the democratic output legitimacy of national governments [...]."

In addition, the effect of the democracy root decreases and is no longer statistically significant when controlling for the perceived benefits of being a member of the EU. The perceived benefits of the EU may capture the effect of anti-elite salience in the context of democratic output possibly being more important than democratic input. This could be seen in light of what has been theorised regarding the importance of improving the democratic output legitimacy of the EU, instead of merely focusing on the democratic input legitimacy of the union. Without denying the deficits in input-oriented democratic legitimacy at the European level, due perhaps to the lack of a collective identity or a Europe-wide institutional infrastructure through which officeholders could be held accountable by a European constituency, the importance of incorporating arguments regarding democratic output legitimacy has been stressed. In short, we argue that the dual processes of European legal and economic integration are weakening problem-solving capacities and hence the democratic output legitimacy of national governments and that the development of effective and legitimate problem-solving at the European level is not satisfactorily compensating for this loss. Increasing the effectiveness of multilevel governance would, in turn, improve the democratic legitimacy of the union (Scharpf 1999). However, the fact that the operationalisation of the democracy root is suboptimal should be taken into account when assessing the importance of the democracy root. The variable used does not fully capture the parties’ perceptions of a democratic deficit, which means that conclusions regarding the importance of the democracy root are by necessity tentative.

Given that the root causes were hypothesised to be driving euroscepticism, it appears plausible that the results remain the same while adding control variables in Models 2 and 3. Thus, adding control variables merely strengthens the results constituted in the
previous models. That ‘EU_budgets’ (sovereignty), ‘EU_cohesion’ (right economy) and nationalism (nationalism) remain statistically significant while controlling for relevant variables strengthen each explanation’s impact on these root causes. Therefore, our results confirm previous research identifying these root causes as drivers of euroscepticism. Of the variables that remain statistically significant in the multivariate models, ‘EU_budgets’ and ‘EU_cohesion’ seem to have the greatest impact on ‘EU_position’. If we analyse the explained variance in each model (adjusted $r^2$), the sovereignty root cause and economy root cause seem to make up the majority of the explained variance in the fully specified model (0.575 and 0.498 respectively). This indicates that the relative explanatory power of these two root causes is stronger than the nationalist root cause, even though the effect of the nationalist root is as statistically significant as the others. It should also be noted that the degree of explained variance in the full model is unusually high, indicating that almost 80% of the variance in our dependent variable (‘EU_position’) can be explained through the independent variables. One interpretation of this unusually high level of $r^2$ is that the analysed root causes almost completely cover and/or include the potential explanatory factors that lie behind euroscepticism. The results presented above, and the conclusions that we have drawn from them, should thus be understood as credible.

**DISCUSSION**

This study has analysed four possible root causes of the euro scepticism of eurosceptic parties: democracy, sovereignty, economics, and national identity. By studying the CHES data through both bivariate and multivariate regression analyses, we have tested the effect of these root causes on eurosceptic political parties’ position regarding the EU. Our study shows that the roots of national identity, national sovereignty and the right-wing aspect of the economic root all have significant effects on eurosceptic parties’ views about the EU. The democracy root and the left-wing aspect of the economic root lose their statistical significance in the multivariate analysis. Yet, there remain limitations to what inferences can be drawn from this particular study. We have identified three main future research approaches presented below.

"Analyzing the driving factors in Hungary as one example would be of great relevance in light of the explicit ambitions of the EU regarding social inclusion."

First, future research on different roots of euroscepticism could benefit from using data collected later than 2014. For instance, the recent democratic backslide in Hungary is not captured by the data used for our findings. More specifically, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán “is arguably now proceeding to create a ‘Fidesz people’ in that the last remnant of media freedom and independent civil society are being attacked” (Müller
Analysing the driving factors in Hungary as one example would be of great relevance in light of the explicit ambitions of the EU regarding social inclusion (see, for instance, Müller 2015:141–60).

Second, one aspect of euroscepticism which has not been analysed here is the difference between parties within individual member states. How the root causes connect to individual parties and what their effect is on a national level could be one line of enquiry for future research. The differences between these eurosceptic political parties might be a result of years of existence, regional culture or ingrained local traditions. Studying eurosceptic political parties within the same country in light of potential factors that might affect the eurosceptic standpoint could enrich our understanding of euroscepticism. Further, conducting such research inductively has the potential to find social mechanisms driving euroscepticism that could be generalised to other contexts. Put differently, inductive examination of eurosceptic political parties within the same country has the potential to further our understanding of the driving factors of euroscepticism.

Finally, a task for future research could be analysing the differences in causes of euroscepticism in different member states. For example, differences in the prominence of different roots in the north, south, east and west or between member states that were or were not severely hit by the eurozone crisis could be analysed.

In the introduction of this study, we state that for those who want to secure the future of the EU, it is crucial to understand the factors driving eurosceptic parties. Based on the results of this paper, how should these factors be understood? The prevailing view that euroscepticism has many faces is strengthened by the evidence presented in this study showing that the roots national identity, national sovereignty and the right-wing aspect of the economic root all have significant effects on eurosceptic parties’ views about the EU. In addition, the bivariate analyses show that eurosceptic parties take different positions on different issues related to European integration. Furthermore, in the multivariate analysis all of the proposed root causes contribute (albeit to varying degrees) to the explanation of eurosceptic parties’ positions toward the EU. In other words, in order to combat euroscepticism, it is not sufficient to address only one of the proposed root causes. On the basis of the root causes remaining statistically significant in our fully specified model, addressing euroscepticism seems to be a result of easing citizens’ concerns over how cosmopolitan societies can and will function, how the transfer of power to an EU level affects legitimacy and how the EU should redistribute wealth in sustainable ways across member state borders.

REFERENCES


Should we play ball with Europhobic parties?

Caroline Vernaillen
(Global Manager for PR & Community Building)

*Democracy International* is a Germany-based NGO working to promote direct democracy and citizen participation. Its aim is to give citizens a real say in political decision-making by strengthening direct democracy at the national, European and global level. Democracy International advocates for more transparent and participatory policies, supports activists internationally and organises opportunities to learn and exchange best practices.
There is no denying that Europe is at a crossroads. Since the 2014 European elections the Uppsala students examine in their essay, we have seen one pivotal member-state election after another. Eurosceptic parties have made electoral gains from France to Poland and with the highly controversial Brexit vote, the first member state is preparing to leave the European Union. These are worrying developments and the EU today has a crucial duty as well as a unique opportunity to reinvent itself and present a more positive European project.

The paper “The EU political divide—what explains euroscepticism?” argues that eurosceptic parties threaten the continued existence of the EU because “more voters than ever” have chosen them. They argue that by examining what these parties indicate as drivers of their euroscepticism, we can uncover both how they gain support and the exact sore spots of the EU: we can save the EU by looking at what drives eurosceptic parties. The underlying assumption of this analysis is problematic for several reasons. Is euroscepticism necessarily a problem and, if it is, can we fix the EU by taking suggestions from groups that oppose the European project altogether?

Firstly, the concept of euroscepticism is defined too broadly. We would argue that not all euroscepticism is damaging to the European project, just as blind promotion of the status quo under the guise of pro-Europeanism is also problematic. We believe that if we want to continue to build a democratic and resilient EU, constructive criticism is necessary and desirable. Taking a cue from eurosceptic parties could meaningfully strengthen the EU. However, when it comes to whether the EU should continue to exist, the answer should undoubtedly be yes.

Here we can distinguish between euroscepticism and europhobia, as Bertoncini and Koenig (2014) do: “euroskeptics are the more moderate political forces expressing vocal criticism against the union and its policies and calling for reform” (p. 1). The term ‘europhobes’ however refers “to those that reject European belonging and call for an exit from the EU, the euro, and/or the Schengen area” (Bertoncini & Koenig 2014:1). As explained above, euroscepticism is actually rather healthy. Europhobic parties however, have no interest in improving the EU at all; they oppose the very notion that we are stronger together, “united in diversity”. And so, the question becomes: should we play ball with europhobic parties?

While the paper has correctly identified a worrying evolution, it looks for causes in the wrong place: party programmes. The analysis unfortunately fails to make a connection between the actual structures of the EU and its perception by its citizens.

With regards to programmes of europhobic parties, the paper proposes that they are against European integration because they fear losing their national identity/sovereignty and they oppose mandatory participation in European financial solidarity. Aside from the fact that no causal effect can be determined through this kind of analysis, we need to keep in mind that the problems these parties denounce within the EU aren’t necessarily in line with reality. Europhobic parties haven’t shied away from bending the truth to suit their goals. During the Brexit debate, the leave campaign notably used some spectacular half-truths to obtain their goal of leaving the EU (Telegraph 2017). We cannot strengthen the EU by accommodating lies.
Bertoncini and Koenig (2014) also point out that because “citizens’ attitudes vis-à-vis the EU have consistently identified a mass-elites divide, […] it is all the less surprising […] that so-called ‘populist’ discourses usually reject European integration” (p. 4). We should consider that it may be populist parties that are europhobic and not the other way around.

Let us therefore look at some possible causes outside of those identified by the parties themselves. Firstly, EU elections are still held at the national level. This is problematic for voter mobilisation on the pro-Europe side and for accountability. Allowing national politicians to garner the glory for the EU’s successes and pawn off the blame of their failures onto the EU has eroded the public’s notion of the utility of the EU for decades. Organising real European elections with transnational lists would allow for an actual debate on European policy based on facts and would take some of the wind out of europhobic parties’ sails.

"Organising real European elections with transnational lists would allow for an actual debate on European policy based on facts and would take some of the wind out of europhobic parties' sails."

Furthermore, there is no denying that europhobic parties have managed to persuade voters in many countries. But voters do not equal parties and vice versa. If we want to know why these parties are successful, we need to look at voter motivation, not at party manifestos. Record numbers of people who voted for europhobic parties have indicated that theirs was a protest vote: a vote for change, but not necessarily endorsing the party’s entire programme. For example, most recently 60% of Germans who voted for the extremely europhobic Alternative for Germany (AfD) party indicated that they mostly saw this as voting against all other parties (Mudde 2017).

This is a strong argument for more direct democracy, for giving people a different and more precise way of expressing their discontent beyond elections. The EU has in its arsenal of instruments the little-known European Citizens Initiative, which allows private citizens to propose legislation to the European Commission if they can gather enough support. It is the first and only transnational instrument of its kind, but it remains tragically underused. Strengthening this tool would be a true step toward a more democratic EU.

Evidence does show a rise in discontent with the EU, but pandering to parties who are increasingly inward-looking and often extremely right-wing (Bertoncini et al 2014: 15) cannot be a realistic solution in a globalised world. We need the EU to tackle the immense challenges we face and can only strengthen the EU by reviewing how it interacts with its citizens.
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Fighting poverty: perspectives for a collective European social security strategy

Authors
Fridolin Firsching
Vincent Homp
Julia Mollerus
Lennart Schmidt
Tatiana Valyaeva

Supervisor
Johanna Schmidt-Jevtic, M.A.
Social divisions in the European Union became more visible in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and have proven a burden on unity within the European community. This report illustrates and evaluates the social security initiatives carried out by the European Union. It critiques the general ineffectiveness of established initiatives and frameworks combatting the increasing rate of poverty and social exclusion in the EU. Acknowledging that a multitude of factors shape the social, economic and political reality of the European people, this report makes policy recommendations for overcoming these social divides while building on existing EU tools. We focus on developing social security strategies on a European level while striking a balance between EU economic and social policy.

“United in diversity”—this has been the motto of the European Union since the year 2000. Given the diversity of social security systems across all member states, this slogan certainly applies to the EU’s social policy infrastructure. Instead of establishing a supranational, unitary social security system, EU social policy is generally constituted on the premise of the member states’ individual policy requirements in order to promote convergent living standards throughout the union. In reality, however, there is still a divide between member states’ living standards and poverty rates, which in turn reflects a concern over growing social injustice.

In order to truly unite in diversity, therefore, it is imperative for the European Union to tackle the divisions of social (in)security and prosperity at their origins, namely to reform existing social policy systems and frameworks in favour of an enhanced collective European social security strategy. Despite acknowledging that the variety of different social security systems within the EU remains useful in coping with differing societal configurations, we conclude that in order to fulfil its pledge of unity (read: equality) in diversity, the institutions of the EU need to become more proactive in coordinating and advancing the fight against poverty. This report aims to critique established frameworks combatting social insecurity and poverty in the EU and to explore possible new avenues for such a collective social security agenda.

"... there is still a divide between member states’ living standards and poverty rates, which in turn reflects a concern over growing social injustice."

The first section introduces the conceptual and statistical backgrounds forming the root of the issue of poverty in the EU. After establishing a working definition of poverty for this report, it stresses the statistical disparity across regions. These findings not only highlight the gravity of the situation in many member states, but also illustrate the economic reality on which existing European social policies are built and from which any new social security strategy must depart in the future.
CONCEPTUALISATION OF POVERTY

What is poverty? To analyse whether poverty is being combatted effectively in Europe, one first needs to understand how the EU defines the concept. The European Union uses a relative definition of poverty:

People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live. [...] They are often excluded and marginalised from participating in activities (economic, social and cultural) that are the norm for other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted. (Council of the EU 2004:8)

In order to reduce both absolute and relative poverty, the European Union set a target for poverty reduction in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy which targeted both risk and exclusion for at least 20 million people in the EU (European Commission 2010:5). The poverty target is defined as a combination of one or more of three indicators:

1. the “at-risk-of-poverty rate” includes every person with a disposable income below 60% of the national median income and reflects the relativity of monetary poverty in a given time or space;
2. the “severe material deprivation rate” acknowledges the financial restrictions poor people face by including everyone whose income is so low that they cannot afford four out of nine basic expenditures of an ordinary and decent European lifestyle (such as covering unexpected expenses or providing adequate heating, etc.);
3. the “very low work intensity rate” reflects the share of population aged 0-59 years living in households where the working age inhabitants worked less than 20% of their total work potential during the past year (LeCerf 2016:4–5).

In effect, the EU’s fight against poverty goes beyond the “satisfaction of basic human needs”, which is used to ameliorate (absolute) poverty in developing countries (LeCerf 2016:3–5) and seeks instead to attain a certain standard of living for each EU citizen reflecting the normative ideals and redistribution of economic benefits within the EU.

STATISTICAL FINDINGS

According to 2014 Eurostat data, there is great divergence among member states in terms of their at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion rates, from well-performing member states in Northern and Central Europe to increasing poverty in the peripheries, especially in the Southern and Southeastern countries (LeCerf 2016:5). In the aftermath of the financial crisis, as well as due to the forces of globalisation, growing demands for a more competitive European economy led to the widespread impression that the EU
must cut social expenditures and ease regulations for businesses to compete globally and to increase GDP growth (Tausch 2011:21-22). However, the robustness of the EU’s social safety net is key to preventing “a downward spiral of social dumping” (Cristescu, Stanila & Andreica 2013:5) as higher national GDP does not automatically entail higher investment in combatting social issues. Although some member states, in particular Scandinavian countries, have been very successful in increasing their respective GDP and decreasing levels of unemployment, the divergence among EU members is still notable: in 2014 more than a third of the population in Romania, Greece and Bulgaria was at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat 2014 in LeCerf 2016:5).

The relatively high unemployment rate prevalent in most member states is a crucial factor for the aggravation of poverty, resulting in high levels of state expenditures for social protection, which in turn influence the domestic GDP. According to Eurostat, social protection expenditures across the EU average around 30% of GDP. Above the EU average, there are a couple of member states known for their strong social security systems, chiefly those in Northern and Central Europe, while Eastern European member states have the lowest share of social protection expenditure in GDP (Eurostat in Cristescu et al. 2013:5). Intuitively, there seems to be a tangible correlation between the likelihood of being at risk of poverty and social exclusion and a country’s social security expenditures.

"... economic growth without social investment does not alleviate poverty or social exclusion."

A study of all EU countries until 2010 shows the positive impact of social benefit expenditures on the fight against poverty. An increase in real GDP by 1% leads to a decrease in the poverty rate by 0.19%; a 1% increase in the employment rate leads to an average decrease of the poverty rate by 0.22%; yet, a 1% increase in social benefits leads to a decrease in the poverty rate by 0.5% (Cristescu et al. 2013:9). Therefore, the impact of the real GDP growth on poverty reduction is modest at best. These findings highlight the truism that economic growth without social investment does not alleviate poverty or social exclusion.

CURRENT EUROPEAN POLICIES

While the previous section highlights the divisions and diversity in Europe with regard to poverty and national social policies, this section explores the divisions inside the institutional agenda of European institutions. Finding the status quo of social policymaking turned out to be a challenge, and we argue that the current framework is opaque, heavily fragmented into a multitude of different institutions with unclear competencies, plagued by an unclear division of labour between the institutions and reflective of a short-sighted focus on short-term goals that are neither binding enough nor putting enough emphasis on the social dimension over economic policies.
There is an abundance of institutions and initiatives dealing with social policy on the European level: the Council of Europe, the European Commission and its associated departments (Directorate-Generals), the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Council are all distinct institutions sharing responsibilities and competencies. Instead of creating one permanent and continuous framework for Europe, countless initiatives are started, but many are abandoned prematurely and never implemented. To give an overview of existing policies in this section, we will distinguish between EU strategies and the Council of Europe’s approach.

**EU STRATEGIES**

Within the multilevel governance system of the EU, social policy is a joint responsibility of the member states and the union which simultaneously respects the principle of subsidiarity (European Union 2007: Art. 4). The Commission has the right to initiate legislation, which must be approved by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (European Union 2007: Art. 294). For instance, the European Commission recently proposed a European pillar of social rights to advance social policy in the union. Before formal approval by the Council, this proposal will be discussed at the Social Summit in November 2017. The social pillar primarily focuses on strengthening labour markets and increasing employment under fairer conditions in the eurozone as a way to mitigate social exclusion. While unemployment and poverty are indubitably related, it neglects directly improving the conditions of people not considered part of the eligible workforce (European Commission Press Release Database 2017). Moreover, since the Council does not have the legislative power to decide upon social welfare policy, all legislation needs to be tied to economic policy to pass. In reality, only few initiatives tackling poverty and social fragmentation have ever come to fruition. Instead the EU has relied mostly on the open method of coordination (omc) in social policy. The omc is a soft law mechanism based on voluntary cooperation of member states and relies mostly on guidelines and indicators instead of legally binding goals (Jessoula 2015: 491).

The European Commission is designed to give a pan-European perspective to European problems and find overarching solutions in the interest of the EU as a whole (Peterson 2012: 105–108). However, most of its activities focus on the economic dimension, namely employment instead of social issues. On the other hand, the Council of the European Union meets in 10 different configurations of 28 national ministers, one of which is the council configuration for employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs (epsco). The epsco Council meets four times a year to discuss social affairs from the perspective of the national states (Hayes-Renshaw 2012: 71). However, priorities within the Council are minimal in scope and are easily discarded whenever the Council presidency rotates.

The European Commission recently put forth its Europe 2020 strategy, which is one of the most significant contributions to establishing equal living standards across the EU. Although it was originally designed as a growth strategy with economic targets, it also aims to overcome the aftermath of the financial crisis by allowing more people in
the European Union to profit from growth. One of the three key priorities as formulated in Europe 2020 is “inclusive growth”—fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion (European Commission 2010:5).

The headline target most relevant for this analysis is the goal of removing the risk of poverty for at least 20 million people, thereby reducing the number of people in Europe living below the poverty line by 25%. Supported by the flagship initiative European Platform Against Poverty (EPAP), it enhances policy coordination among EU countries using OMC. It aims to create a joint commitment among the member states, EU institutions and key stakeholders to fight poverty and social exclusion by increasing efficiency and trust. EPAP works to find new participative ways to fight poverty while continuing to develop prevention policies and target needs where they arise (European Commission 2010). NGOs have now become essential actors in the social field. By monitoring the EU countries’ economic and structural reforms, EPAP promotes robust evidence of what does and does not work in social policy innovations.

Scholars argue that the platform has even greater potential to prompt further positive developments such as broadened consultation and enhanced coordination within the Commission (Sabato & Vanhercke 2014). Potentially, it could serve as a hub for discussions on the social dimension of Europe 2020 and even as a social Europe’s watchdog. While EPAP does not set binding targets, both its strength and weakness lie within voluntary cooperation. Nevertheless, the EPAP is illustrative of well-meant and ambitiously started EU projects that phase out prematurely before unlocking their full potential. For unclear reasons, no efforts have been taken to keep this promising platform working. Meanwhile the European Commission has started dedicating its energy to new projects, like the newly introduced European pillar of social rights.

"...100 million people will still be at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020."

To conclude, the poverty reduction measures formulated in Europe 2020 are certainly a step in the right direction, because they provide measurable and attainable goals on the European level for the first time. As a consequence, the European Social Fund now dedicates 20% of its budget to social inclusion. However, the European Commission admitted in its assessment of Europe 2020 that the situation in the EU is not improving quickly. Even though the more prosperous Central and Northern European member states mostly met the goals set in the agenda, 100 million people will still be at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020, because hardly any intrinsic structural changes were implemented in the majority of member states, especially in Southern and Eastern Europe (Bley 2017:150). This makes it questionable whether EU strategies with temporal limitations and without overarching normative guidelines are ambitious enough to deal with social issues across the continent. It also proves that specific models of social security systems can tackle poverty more accurately and are able to sustain a more balanced society with regard to social security matters. Even so, Europe 2020 does help to improve
the economic and social dimensions of the EU, thus raising awareness of social issues in the EU (Marlier & Natali 2010:27).

**EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER (ESC)**

Although overshadowed by the more well-known European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the European Social Charter (ESC) (Council of Europe 2015) is a significant document of the Council of Europe covering social and economic rights beyond the ECHR. Following its revision in 1996, the ESC now contains seven dimensions dedicated to different basic social rights, namely housing, health, education, employment, legal and social protection, movement of persons as well as nondiscrimination (Beneelhocine 2012:19–21).

All but nine member states of the EU have ratified the 1996 version of the ESC, but the Council of Europe is not a body of the EU and the ESC is consequently not an EU charter. This is significant because the ESC could supplement the supranational character of the ECHR with a strengthened commitment to social security on an intergovernmental level. Accordingly, it could be used as a normative basis for a binding intergovernmental or collective EU strategy, an opportunity we will further explore below.

**PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT STRATEGIES**

We have shown that attempts to introduce a coordinated European social strategy have yet to prove effective. For instance, the Europe 2020 poverty reduction goal still seems out of reach. This shines a light on two questions: are strategies with a fixed deadline the best way to reach a long-term goal? And in different terms, is there a need for a theoretical framework to avoid the short-sightedness of such strategies?

"Are strategies with a fixed deadline the best way to reach a long-term goal?"

There are various obstacles blocking the goal of a comprehensive EU social security strategy. The EU does not have a mandatory-for-all system, and thus it is difficult to force the issues at hand on the European level. As the organisation and financing of social security systems remains a domestic responsibility of each member state, there are various regional models that are then coordinated by the EU to ensure both a smooth transition of people across borders and the protection of their welfare (Aiginger & Leoni 2009:4). Factors such as cultural predisposition rooted in historical developments, systemic marginalisation of specific social groups and their exclusion from the labour market as well as degrees of infrastructure and urbanisation not only greatly influenced the types of social security systems that have been established, but also continue to constrain their reforms and maintain the vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion.

Even though social protection systems are still comparatively young, differences between the member states are immense, and it would be utopian to demand a huge leap
from this confederation-like system to one unitary, centralised social security system. This is especially true as different policies might not be as salient in one state or region as they are in another. Moreover, we concur that the existing system is neither completely inactive on nor incapable of tackling those issues, especially on the micro level where various new programs have launched.

"Nevertheless, the European Union still needs to act as an intermediary, an adviser and if necessary an enforcer of these imperative goals."

For these reasons, we believe it is advantageous to use these divisions to align these systems using "working strategies", i.e., best practices, and a greater exchange of ideas in a more formal and binding setting. In effect, we demand convergence and coordination, not homogeneity per se. Similar to existing regulations on climate change, we believe it is necessary to have a mandatory set of rules and aims, but would agree to leave it up to each state to decide on how to reach these goals depending on their capabilities and resources in the form of a directive. Nevertheless, the European Union still needs to act as an intermediary, an adviser and if necessary an enforcer of these imperative goals.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The previous sections highlighted how the Europe 2020 strategy and the ESC laid the groundwork for a common approach to a European social security strategy. Nonetheless, such an endeavour requires further development and thorough reform of the social policy coordination process of the EU. Consequently, we recommend the establishment of a new social policy coordination procedure at the EU level.

The ESC—stipulating basic social rights for every EU resident—represents the heart of the new procedure as it provides a normative framework for present and future collective European social security strategies. Although acknowledging that these ESC social rights represent “European values” is certainly a step in the right direction, this normative commitment has not yet translated into European politics. To really improve the situation, these aims must be transferred into realistic policy goals binding for all member states. They should be set for short timeframes and their implementation monitored constantly. Social coordination thus becomes a constant process, unlike for example the fixed-term Europe 2020 strategy.

We recommend adjusting the competencies of the European Union to include social policy independent of economic policy; this would require a change to the EU treaties. The European Parliament should be the institution responsible for setting effective social policy targets, in order to provide democratic legitimation. Additionally, the Commission should implement effective control and monitoring mechanisms. With this
threefold collective European social security strategy, consisting of the ESC as the permanent theoretical framework, the European Parliament and Commission as the institutional bodies implementing the Charter and specific, realistic aims set for a predefined time period, we hope to realign the structure of social policy coordination to overcome divisions wrought by social injustice in the European Union.

Obviously, specific targets must be adjusted to the predispositions of the respective member states. Still, governments will be obligated to use a prescribed percentage of GDP to develop their social security system, encourage financial redistribution and support social projects. This would not only help these projects but also send a signal that the focus of the EU has shifted from economy-oriented employment policies to social security in more general terms.

**CONCLUSION**

This analysis criticised the growing divide in the EU along the lines of poverty and social exclusion. Acknowledging the multitude of factors shaping the social, economic and political reality of Europeans, we call for vertical and horizontal networking between EU social institutions as well as a greater integration of and commitment to workable social politics in the EU as a whole. As the European Union understands itself as normatively responsible for its citizens, i.e., for guaranteeing a dignified life, a collective social security framework is a key feature of the EU often relegated to “high politics”. We aim to shift this focus of the EU from economic growth per se to the social redistribution thereof for the benefit of the socially marginalised.

"We aim to shift this focus of the EU from economic growth per se to the social redistribution thereof for the benefit of the socially marginalised."

The issue of poverty in Europe is a complex topic and numerous EU attempts to eradicate poverty and social exclusion have proven highly ineffective in the long term, due to issues ranging from the lack of commitment to poverty reduction goals by member states to the lack of an overarching framework to consolidate policy direction and coordinate communications. Therefore, our policy recommendations incorporate both greater inclusion of member states as well as more authority for EU bodies and institutions. We acknowledge that many issues hinder this process, but as poverty remediation is not solely a domestic problem but rather in the interest of individual citizens as well as the success of the EU as a whole, we argue that increasing cooperation—both institutionalised in a chartered EU framework and freely communicated in an OMC process—is a significant step forward in the realisation of the EU’s mission to be united in diversity.
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Make protection against poverty and social exclusion a human right

Stephan Schwerdtfeger
(Legal Policy Officer)

The German Caritas Association is a registered charity and Catholic welfare association with offices in Freiburg, Berlin and Brussels. Founded in 1897, it is the national umbrella organisation for thousands of legally independent diocesan, regional, local and specialised Caritas associations providing social services on a non-profit basis. It advocates for disadvantaged people and actively takes part in social policy debates.
WHY FIGHTING POVERTY MATTERS

In 2010 the European Union and its member states adopted the Europe 2020 strategy—the EU’s guiding framework for achieving “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” through 2020 (European Council 2010). The strategy consists of five headline targets, including lifting at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by the end of 2020. In 2008 (the reference year for the poverty target) almost 116 million persons—or 23.7% of the total EU population—faced such conditions (Eurostat 2017). Instead of decreasing, that number surged to more than 120 million and remained at that high level for several years. Even though it decreased again by 2015 (according to the latest available data), the number of people affected by poverty and social exclusion is higher than 2008 levels. Thus the fight against poverty remains a pressing issue for the EU. On a personal level, experiencing poverty can be humiliating and depressing. On a political level, it can erode trust in the political system and endanger public acceptance of the EU as a union striving for the prosperity of all. Consequently, reducing poverty is most relevant to the EU’s future and policy suggestions on a topic that gets little public attention are greatly welcomed.

THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF POVERTY IS POLITICAL

The authors of the above paper give a comprehensive overview of the topic by examining the definition of poverty, different types of social security systems and statistical findings. For the conceptualisation of poverty, they refer—justifiably—to the definitions, targets and indicators of the Europe 2020 strategy. However, it must be kept in mind that these—despite their unbiased appearance—are subject to political ambitions: While it is true, for example, that attainment of the Europe 2020 strategy’s poverty target is measured, as the authors state, as “a combination of one or more of three indicators” within the framework of the strategy, the selection of which and how many indicators is up to national governments (European Council 2010: 12). It is reasoned that this allows member states to “[take] into account their national circumstances and priorities” (European Council 2010: 12). However, different indicators reflect different forms of poverty (in short: relative poverty, material deprivation and unemployment) and not choosing to recognise all of them results in an incomplete and selective recognition of poverty. As a consequence, policies designed to fight poverty will also be incomplete and selective.

FIGHTING POVERTY SHOULD BE RIGHTS-BASED AND NOT LIMITED TO SOCIAL SPENDING

The authors denounce the “abundance of institutions […] dealing with social policy on the European level”, although this is to a large extent (leaving the Council of Europe regime aside) quite comparable with the institutions found in a (federal) nation state. After all, the principle of separation of powers requires different institutions for law-making
and execution as well as the representation of member states which increases democratic legitimacy and ensures subsidiarity.

The authors rightly point out that EU social policies and the European Social Charter (ESC) are two distinct systems that could and should be integrated much better. However, even though the authors want the ESC to be the “normative framework for [...] collective European social security strategies”, they fall short in their suggestion to strengthen the institutional role of the ESC in and for the EU. While the ESC is mentioned in the EU treaties (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ( Treaty of Rome ), art. 151; Treaty on European Union (Maastricht Treaty), preamble) and many articles are already reflected in EU legislation (Council of Europe 2014: 6), there is plenty of room for institutional incorporation of the charter into EU law. For example, the Copenhagen criteria made it in fact a necessary prerequisite for EU candidate countries to ratify the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) prior to accession. The same does not hold true for the ESC. Similarly, it is legally foreseen in TEU, art. 6 (2) that the EU as an organisation accedes to the ECHR; no such provision exists for the accession of the EU to the ESC.

Were every EU member state to ratify the (highest possible number of articles of the) revised ESC, it could become the social constitution of the EU. Practically, it would mean that all EU citizens could rely on the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion (ESC, art. 30)—a rights-based approach that promises to be more effective than the “normative framework” envisaged by the authors. But even without institutional changes, the ESC could easily be recognised within the European Pillar of Social Rights—a social compass drafted by the European Commission—as suggested by Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland (Council of Europe 2016).

The authors want governments to spend a “prescribed percentage of GDP to develop their social security system, encourage financial redistribution and support social projects”. Although the eradication of poverty through spending seems plausible, in reality it is more complex. For example, single parents are at higher risk of poverty because they often have to work less in order to care for their children. Although investing in childcare infrastructure (with state funds) remains essential, the creation of a legislative framework that allows for more adaptable work arrangements (flexible working hours, home office, etc.) will also help ease the situation at no extra cost to the state. Similarly, in-work poverty can be abolished by introducing or raising minimum wages which similarly requires no state funding. In any case, it does not make sense to simply link social policy expenses to GDP: the state would spend more during economic booms and less during recessions, while the need for social spending would run counter to these economic trends. Instead, social policy expenses should be calculated on an as-needed basis.

In order to effectively fight poverty and social exclusion in the EU, policy proposals must be more courageous (as with the ESC) and exhibit greater differentiation when it comes to spending. This way, the EU could harness several instruments available at the European level to better help its least well-off citizens.
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Economic division, unemployment and the future of Europe
We address European divisions from an economic perspective, concurrently looking at how economic conditions affect people’s attitudes toward the European Union and its institutions. The 2008 financial crisis has interrupted convergence across member states, directly affecting support for integration. As unemployment is the most relevant economic concern for EU citizens, we investigate the dimensions of unemployment and its causes to provide targeted suggestions for improving the labour market and social policies at the EU level.

Since its inception with the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the European project has aimed for economic integration with expectations of further social and political union. Over the years this process has produced an important phenomenon of convergence among its adherents. Still, the European Union of today is far from being the “ever closer union among the peoples of Europe” enshrined in the Treaty itself. The 2008 financial crisis and member-state responses to it struck a serious blow as they unevenly affected European countries on the basis of previously accumulated structural imbalances. As illustrated by the main macroeconomic indicators, Europe is de facto working as a multispeed entity, polarised not only in terms of economic performance, but also in terms of trust of and attachment toward the EU.

There is robust historical evidence showing that economic performance matters to political outcomes, particularly in bad times. Economic voting is a well-known phenomenon, and our analysis reveals that attitudes toward the European Union are no exception. In particular, the unemployed stand most fiercely opposed to Europe, even in countries which suffered least during the crisis. Thus, unemployment stands out as the main culprit for economic dissatisfaction and declining support for the EU, with uneven effects throughout European society. Our analysis emphasises that lower skilled and younger workers suffer disproportionately more in measures of labour inclusion and systematically face more unemployment than other social and generational categories. Consequently, a number of policy suggestions—implying different degrees of EU involvement—have been developed in order to fill the shortages causing European division and threatening the deepening of the European project, to lay new foundations for an “ever closer union”.

**CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE IN THE EU**

Over the past few decades, the European integration project has promoted real economic convergence among participating countries, as measured by GDP per capita levels of lower-income countries catching up with those of higher-income economies. This process hastened important integration efforts. In particular, the European Economic Community, the Customs Union, the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty deepened commercial ties, laid the basis for a political union with common policies in many respects and led to the attainment of the four freedoms of movement of goods, services, people and capital. At the same time, enlargements fostered real convergence, successfully turning the six founding members (Belgium, Italy, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany) into the EU-15—welcoming the UK, Denmark
and Ireland in 1973, Portugal, Spain and Greece in the 1980s and Sweden, Finland and Austria in 1995. Then, the accession of Central and Eastern European countries, Malta and Cyprus led to the creation of the EU-28 by 2013. Convergence of the newest members was also made possible thanks to ad hoc policies, including regional initiatives that financed the creation of jobs and infrastructure. Overall, in the first decade of the 2000s, convergence in Europe was achieved mostly thanks to higher growth rates attained by new EU member countries. The Economic and Monetary Union, expected to boost convergence across the earliest adopters of the euro, surprisingly brought little of it.

This picture changed in 2008, when the global financial crisis halted growth and produced a severe economic slowdown in all member states. In response, countries enacted expansionary fiscal policies and were forced to rescue their banks with a consequent increase in public debt. In 2010 doubts over public debt sustainability in weaker economies pushed investors to sell government bonds—mostly Greek, Irish, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian ones—marking the outbreak of the European sovereign debt crisis. These countries had to implement painful austerity measures in order to claim financial relief from the IMF, the EU and the ECB. The period of widespread growth and enthusiasm for European integration came to an end, and unprecedented divergence dynamics took place in the EU-15 and across the earliest adopters of the euro (EA12). At the same time, convergence in newcomer countries slowed down as well.

The economic divergence within EU-15 countries is best illustrated by real growth rates and unemployment rates. As the global financial crisis was unfolding, i.e., between 2007 and 2009, all European countries experienced negative GDP growth rates. From 2010 onwards, growth dynamics instead became variegated. Countries with a lower public debt—Germany, Sweden and France—were able to curb the economic slowdown caused by the subsequent sovereign debt crisis. In contrast, countries like Spain and Italy experienced a feeble recovery followed by another recession, a situation even more painful for Greece, whose GDP growth rate unceasingly plummeted after 2007. Austerity measures constrained the capacity for huge growth-oriented investments, cementing divergence in real GDP growth across EU countries.

The crisis also impacted the labour market, uncovering yet greater divergence across countries. From homogeneously low and stable levels throughout the continent, unemployment rates escalated in economies without fiscal capacity and constrained by austerity. On the other side of the spectrum is Germany, where the number of unemployed people has been steadily decreasing since 2005.

But why did the crisis hit Europe unevenly? The answer lies in a number of structural imbalances already present when economic hardship ensued. The recession had the effect of exposing and exacerbating them.

First of all, consider the imbalance related to productivity. Simply speaking, total factor productivity (TFP) captures how efficient countries are at producing goods and services with employed resources (e.g., labour and capital). Countries that are able to improve their productivity over time perform better in terms of investment, export dynamics and GDP growth. Notwithstanding a general upward trend before the crisis, average TFP has always been much lower in Greece than in the rest of Europe. By the same
fashion, it has stagnated in Italy and Spain since the early 2000s. These trends are closely associated with unit labour costs, which are higher in countries characterised by lower TFP. This signals the existence of labour market frictions in the pre-crisis period, which rendered it difficult to absorb the economic shock.

Relatedly, there was an imbalance in current accounts. The current account balance tells us whether countries are net exporters or net importers of goods and services. In the decade predating the crisis, countries like Spain, Italy and Greece were net importers, whereas countries like Germany and Sweden were net exporters. This asymmetry was sustained by large movements of capital from surplus to deficit countries, facilitated by the existence of a monetary union with integrated capital markets. Euro-denominated investments became extremely free after EMU setup. In fact, the common currency area was supposed to work as a safe, stable environment for all participating economies to thrive. However, rather than being long-term investments conducive to growth, financial transfers within the EMU were generally in the form of short-term portfolio investments, ultimately buying public debt which had been used for unproductive and unsustainable government spending. Moreover, this type of instrument is speculative in nature and may be withdrawn at the first sense of danger as witnessed during the sovereign debt crisis of 2010.

DIVISIONS WITHIN AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EU

The European Union is suffering not only as a consequence of economic stagnation and imbalance. Over the last few years, embittered political debate and increasing social unrest have paved the way for the birth of major eurosceptic and populist parties across Europe. It is not a coincidence that the outbreak of economic divergence coincided with the strengthening of resentment against the European integration project to a degree that—in the wake of Brexit and the migration crisis—the very survival of the European Union has been questioned.

In-depth analysis of the changes in overall attitudes toward the EU is revealing. The data used are from Eurobarometer, a survey established in 1974 by the European Commission to monitor European public opinion. Two questions in the Standard Eurobarometer can shed light on the attitudes of European citizens: one about their trust in the EU, and one about their attachment to the union.

In Figure 1 we focus on trust in the EU over time. The related question allows for three possible answers: “tend to trust”, “tend not to trust” and “don’t know”. Three facts stand out:

1. In the years of economic convergence (2002–2007), the sentiment of trust in the EU was high. In particular, it peaked right before the financial crisis of 2007, when distrust was also at its lowest;
2. During the recession of 2008–09, the trend reversed. The level of distrust eventually surpassed the level of trust, concomitant with the start of the sovereign debt crisis. The sentiment of distrust ramped up to unprecedented levels, while trust continued its vertiginous fall;
3. The gap has slowly been closing since the recovery of growth. However, the level of distrust is still at worryingly high levels and significantly above the pre-crisis values, signalling that a majority of Europeans still opposes the European project.

![Figure 1. Trust in the EU.](image)

A similar tendency emerges from the analysis of the second Eurobarometer question with regard to EU attachment. This question allows for two answers: “total attached” and “total not attached”. The share of people answering positively fell below 50% after 2007 and reached an all-time low in 2013. A simultaneous decline in both trust and attachment is indicative of eroding support for the roots of the European project; apparently, the citizens of Europe are no longer convinced that economic and political integration can lead to prosperity.

In light of these findings, we investigated how economic divergence affects attitudes across countries. Figure 2 displays the relationship between the share of each country’s respondents who “tend to trust” the EU and those countries’ growth rates. Two interesting conclusions can be drawn:

1. Higher growth is associated with higher trust in the EU. Tellingly, Central and Eastern European countries have experienced significant convergence, have been growing at the highest rates and are in general the biggest supporters of the EU;
2. There is significant heterogeneity in the levels of trust across EU-15 countries despite similar growth patterns. Neighbouring countries such as Germany and Denmark have grown at roughly the same pace, but the Danish population is considerably more europhile. Germany performs better than Italy, which has not grown much recently. Yet trust is equally low in both countries, suggesting that people may also lose trust in the EU for opposite reasons.
Besides interstate differences, attitudinal divides are also present within countries among different segments of society. Figure 3 shows the shares of respondents who trust and distrust the EU, sorted by occupation. Two observations can be made:

1. There are only two categories in which trust prevails: managers and students;
2. Lack of faith in the EU is prominent across all the other categories: the self-employed, the retired and, above all, the unemployed. This provides further evidence of the link between economic and attitudinal divides: the jobless are the fiercest EU opponents, showing the greatest gap between trust and distrust.
A report by the European Parliament (2016) completes the picture by showing that since the start of the 2008 financial crisis, Europeans have indicated unemployment as the paramount challenge faced by their countries and a more pressing issue than the economic situation itself. Additionally, when asked how the EU should spend its budget, an ever-expanding majority of people pick “social affairs and employment”.

"... when asked how the EU should spend its budget, an ever-expanding majority of people picks 'social affairs and employment'."

Overall, our analysis reveals that economic divergence exerts a dangerous influence on support for the EU. Further, citizens have specifically called the EU to take action against the problem causing the greatest suffering and unrest in their societies: unemployment.

**SPOTLIGHT ON UNEMPLOYMENT**

Unemployment is among the culprits driving European division, not only from a purely economic perspective, but also through people’s perceptions of the European Union. Economic factors do matter in shaping people’s political beliefs and perceptions about institutions, and the EU is no exception to this general tendency.

So far, our analysis has ascribed the post-2008 diverging trend of unemployment to structural imbalances previously accumulated in some countries and exacerbated by the crisis. Still, unemployment is a multifaceted phenomenon; the crisis did play a role in determining its upward trend in many areas of Europe, but unemployment reflects the interplay of numerous factors. Looking at disaggregated unemployment figures by categories of workers helps to grasp some of these complex facets. Among the social categories struggling the most with labour market inclusion, low-skilled and young workers stand out. We address both groups below.

**Why do skills matter?**

In industrialised economies, educational qualifications shield workers from the threat of unemployment. Citizens with primary education face the highest rate of unemployment, followed by workers with secondary and then tertiary education levels. Evidence endorses the role of education in shaping the level of unemployment for several reasons, among which globalisation, technology and mobility are worth considering:

- **Globalisation**: The massive inflow of cheap imports from China and other low-income countries intrinsic to globalisation put competitive pressure on EU firms more exposed to foreign competition (mainly those in textile, metal and electric/optical equipment manufacturing). Workers employed in these firms—
which suffered disproportionately from globalisation—generally have relatively lower levels of education. Bloom, Draca & Van Reenen (2015) found that a panel of firms in 12 European countries cut employment by 3.6% for every 10% increase in Chinese imports. At the same time, globalisation favoured the reallocation of job opportunities toward more productive firms and service-based industries, which require a workforce with higher levels of education. This increased demand for highly-skilled workers (Utar 2014);

- **Technology**: Skill-biased technical change (SBTC) is regarded as a primary driver of displacement of low-skilled workers in developed economies (Berman, Bound & Machin 1998). SBTC pivots on the advantage of skilled over unskilled labour: the newest technologies are complementary to skilled labour and threaten unskilled workers by allowing an easy substitution of their jobs with capital investments;

- **Mobility**: Once fired, low-skilled workers struggle more with job searching, as their lower education level does not allow them to easily shift from one sector to another. Indeed, non-college educated workers face a lower level of mobility (Notowidigdo 2010), both sectoral and geographical, finding it very hard to escape the unemployment trap.

### Why does age matter?

The unemployment picture worsens when focusing on workers aged 15–24; in fact, youth unemployment is disproportionately higher than the overall unemployment rate, with profound heterogeneity across EU countries. The youth-adult unemployment gap widened with the crisis, but other factors preceded the recession and interplayed with it. Some of the most relevant factors include:

- Young workers are mostly employed in sectors sensitive to business cycles (manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants); thus, they are more vulnerable to crises, because the latter disproportionately hit the sectors in which they are employed (Banerji, Saksonovs, Lin & Blavy 2014). Clearly, countries in which these cyclical sectors are dominant also face higher levels of youth unemployment;

- Bell and Blanchflower (2011) found that firms in distress during the 2008 recession preferred to fire young workers first, as these have less firm-specific human capital. This deprived them of the opportunity to gather enough expertise and skills to match the concurrent rising demand for a more experienced workforce (driven also by globalisation and the SBTC phenomenon previously discussed);

- Labour market institutions and youth-oriented policies profoundly differ across Europe and are pivotal for the young-adult unemployment gap. In particular, Dolado (2015) found that countries with lower levels of youth unemployment implement policies that enable young workers to successfully integrate into the labour market. Most notably, dual vocational training—which combines on-the-job training with formal vocational schooling—significantly improves employment stability.
and wages (Adda, Dustmann, Meghir & Robin 2011). On the other hand, higher statutory minimum wages/social contributions increase the level of youth unemployment. Many young people are not as productive as a high minimum wage requires and they are less likely to seek out and accept low-paid job offers if they receive generous welfare benefits and financial assistance from their families (Bell et all 2011). Lastly, the countries which performed worst in terms of youth unemployment due to the recession were characterised by dual labour markets, magnifying the burden of the crisis on youth. Dual labour markets are characterised by differential treatment of temporary and permanent workers. Where economic layoffs of permanent contract workers are nearly impossible, they are largely insulated from shocks, leaving all risk to be borne by temporary workers. As young people are frequently hired through temporary contracts, these employees suffered disproportionately more when the crisis imposed massive layoffs.

**WHAT’S NEXT? EUROPE’S FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT**

Given the centrality of unemployment as an economic phenomenon and a social plague, it is crucial that the EU intervenes for the survival and success of its integration process, with specific attention to the mostly affected countries and social groups. The EU has undertaken several actions to create more and better jobs, aiming at smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. The Europe 2020 growth strategy represents the most significant step in this direction: countries have agreed to increase participation in the labour force to 75% of the working-age population and to increase the share of people with tertiary education to 40%.

"Given the centrality of unemployment as an economic phenomenon and a social plague, it is crucial that the EU intervenes for the survival and success of its integration process, with specific attention to the mostly affected countries and social groups."

Interstate differences in the levels, composition and dynamics of unemployment require tailoring solutions at a national level. Moreover, social policy is mainly a responsibility of member states. EU institutions have thus far defined a harmonised general framework and verified that the policies enacted by each country comply with the common goals. Within this framework, we have identified some policy proposals that envisage close cooperation between the EU and its member states, with increasingly more direct EU involvement in social policy:
1. Stimulate growth through investment in R&D, market integration and by adoption of a pro-globalisation stance. Employment can be sustained most effectively via strong labour demand, and the construction of the single market has spurred growth and convergence among countries;

2. Build an adequate safety net for the losers of globalisation and technical change, such that growth becomes inclusive and shared. Active labour market policies increasingly supported by the European Social Fund encourage the adaptation of human capital to the new needs of the economy while avoiding the risk of unemployment traps;

3. Increase EU co-responsibility and financial involvement in dealing with unemployment. Unemployment benefits constitute a significant portion of public expenditure; although they might discourage work in the long run, granting them allows people to maintain a decent standard of living while focusing on their job search or training program;

4. Undertake structural and institutional reforms in order to lay the foundation of a truly European labour market with common rules: cut the interstate gap in labour costs by levelling out labour income taxation and continue to pressure convergence in employment protection legislation. The EU should conduct thorough research to identify minimum wage thresholds that do not harm weaker participants in the job market. It should promote the decentralisation of wage setting at firm or sectoral level to incentivise workers to move to higher-productivity firms which pay higher wages;

5. Supplementary measures for younger workers should encompass action against early school leaving, coordination of education policies as well as improvement of employability throughout Europe by means of vocational training and apprenticeships during studies. Euler (2013) notes that vocational training can be successful only with favourable social and legal subsystems in which firms offer apprenticeships and trade unions support this new labour market relationship. As a complement to vocational training and as a response to digitalisation, continuous training and a more flexible educational system should be envisaged;

6. Facilitate the involvement of firms in the formation process of young workers. Provide financial assistance to small and medium firms which might otherwise be unable to sustain training costs in a competitive environment;

7. Enact a wide range of social policies complementary to education, labour and participation in the labour force: policies against social exclusion, family policies and the public provision of childcare. To make growth truly inclusive and fair, welfare states will have to ensure that workers are not trapped in low-skill jobs by implementing family, labour, education and retraining policies that improve life chances over everyone’s life cycle (Esping-Andersen 2000).
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A new social contract for Europe 2.0

Sandro Gobetti
(Coordinator)

Basic Income Network Italia was founded in 2008 by a group of sociologists, economists, lawyers and researchers who have studied and promoted the introduction of a basic guaranteed income in Italy. Basic Income Network Italia is member of Basic Income Earth Network. It organises public meetings, advises various stakeholders (political institutions, academics, NGOs) on basic income issues and publishes independent research.
The Bocconi contribution to this volume highlights factors that have led to the growth of both economic and social welfare differences between European countries, especially following the great crisis of 2007/08, and a gap fostering mistrust toward European integration. The students’ analysis is based on quantitative data, and the main macro-economic variables that define the system equilibrium are exhaustive. In order to revive Europe 2.0, we need to write a new social contract starting with social rights—and among these a fundamental right to guaranteed income and new welfare policies that can respond to emerging social, economic and labour changes in the new century.

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed a new great transformation (Polanyi 1944). Deep changes to modes of production occurred with the shift from a standardised Fordist system to a post-Fordism characterised by the development of new information and communication technologies and the rise of automation processes via digital revolutions, technology platforms and artificial intelligence (Brynjolfsson & McAfee 2014).

This shift led to a radical change in work-life balance for the employed; as Manuel Castells (2010) explains, “Overall, the traditional form of work, based on full-time employment and a career pattern over the life cycle, is being slowly but surely eroded away” (290). This radical crisis in wage-based societies has resulted in a shift to postindustrial societies and in a new phase of capitalist accumulation that has shifted focus from work to financial markets. Further, there has been a relentlessly progressive inability to provide people with protections and security via the main pillars developed for wage-based societies (Balibar 2001). Global trends reduced the size of both the state and its public service interventions, encouraging the privatisation of welfare. As a result, over the last decade we have witnessed a further paradigm shift: from flexibility—as applied generally to labour market regulation—to precariousness—as applied to individual job conditions, wages and existential insecurities.

After World War II, the welfare system was designed to provide protection against social risks during the Fordist era. Europe had various welfare state models and all of these were based on the mediation of capital-labour conflicts, with the importance of the state enshrined. From the mid-1990s welfare reform in many countries aimed exclusively at balancing state budgets in order to curb social spending and included significant changes in social protection (Frazer & Marlier 2009).

This process has produced progressive increases in inequality. Middle-class impoverishment affected both traditional middle-class jobs and newly self-employed workers (Bologna 2007). Further, new forms of poverty have emerged. In 2007 the number of citizens at risk of poverty in Europe was around 79 million (16% of the total population), of whom 32 million lacked resources to meet their basic needs (Eurostat 2009:1). In 2015 the percentage of people at risk of poverty had risen to around 24% (European Commission 2016).

The authors rightly note the importance of educational skills as a shield from the threat of unemployment, but this alone may no longer be enough. President of the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) Giorgio Alleva (2017) claims that “in Italy precarious employment is widespread among graduates more than among those who have [only] a compulsory school qualification. Growing insecurity occurs among those with
the highest levels of education: 21% for those who have completed compulsory schooling, 35% for those with a university degree” (13). The International Labour Organisation (2011) also explains that in many countries young people suffer a dangerous combination of unemployment, precarious employment and persistent risk of poverty.

The boundary between social exclusion and inclusion has become increasingly blurred, as the growth of the number of working poor shows. An increasing number of people become “social[ly] stateless” denizens (Standing 2011), at risk of social exclusion. These stateless persons are a puzzle located at the nexus of contemporary citizenship and social welfare.

The persistence of the 2008 economic crisis and the failure of the European social model has become increasingly evident. The vicious circle between macro-systemic crisis and the absence of a uniform social model leads us to question the most important shared values of Old Europe, based on social protection, access to education, healthcare and civil and social rights (Krugman 2016).

We are at a critical point and several hypothetical solutions emerge: a renewal of coexistence across the continent; the idea of a two- (or more) speed Europe; a eurozone concurrent to political Europe; disintegration toward neonationalism; surviving by simply reproposing the same economic policies. Middle-class anxieties, widespread child poverty and the precariousness of young people trying to enter the labour market across Europe have ironically undermined commitments to social solidarity; if Europeans reach for neonationalist solutions in response to the universal threats of poverty and social and economic security, this will most certainly continue to undermine and indeed perhaps lead to the collapse of continental coexistence.

In this case, we must follow a path of new redistributive policies and pay attention to social dynamics. When speaking of welfare, we must address the social contract providing the basis for the operation of society as a whole.

The authors remind us that “the unemployed stand most fiercely opposed to Europe” and that such europhobia is more obvious when an increasing number of people lack social, political, cultural and economic rights. Anger toward politics in general, and even more toward traditional and institutional parties, is based upon the perception that they are responsible for these unsatisfactory living and economic conditions.

It is time for a new social contract, starting with the relaunch of public welfare and particularly the right to a guaranteed minimum income as a pillar of a new continental policy. Guaranteed income is not a panacea, but it is a strategic element to stop and reverse the growth of economic inequality, provide a sustainable basis for people’s security and redistribute key resources in society.

As the authors say, “The European Union of today is far from being the ‘ever closer union among the peoples of Europe’ enshrined in the Treaty itself.” Therefore, we we surmise that that the realisation of a new social contract is necessary. It may certainly be a boost strong enough to revive Europe 2.0.
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United or divided Europe: the fight against terrorism

Authors
Nejra Hodžic
Constanze Jeftler
Milda Kaklauskaite
Michele MacMillań
Nemanja Predojevic

Supervisor
Dr. Stefan Roch
Assoc. Prof. Marie-Pierre Granger
This article identifies and explores the prevailing divisions among EU member states over counterterrorism strategy implementation in intelligence sharing, border control and deradicalisation policy areas. The positions of the states are analysed within the framework of the two-fold divide—national versus European and security versus freedom. The selected cases are Germany and France, as both countries have recently experienced terrorist attacks but reacted differently. The analysis demonstrates that the two-fold divide is neither present nor equally manifested in all three policy areas. Thus, in order to effectively address transnational terrorism, the European Union needs to further investigate and overcome these divisions.

Terrorism in modern Europe goes back to anarchist movements in the early 1900s and includes nationalist groups like the Irish Republican Army and radical left-wing groups such as the Italian Red Brigades. Until recently, it was largely confined within national borders. After the 9/11 attacks, terrorism materialised as a borderless threat. Realising that it jeopardised core European values and freedoms, the member states of the European Union began cooperating more closely and adopted EU-level measures to fight it. The 2002 Council framework decision that defined terrorist offences for the union was the first step along the path of a joint approach in fighting terrorism, at a time when only five EU member states had detailed legislation on terrorism (Council of the European Union 2002). Since then, the EU has adopted a series of counterterrorism measures ranging from legislation and international agreements to special strategies and the creation of specialised bodies. The perception of threat and the need for a collective response after 9/11 gave the EU an opportunity to take on new roles in a field in which it had no legal competence before (Boer & Monar 2002).

The core of the EU approach is presented in the four pillars of the 2005 EU counterterrorism strategy adopted by the Council. These include preventing people from turning to terrorism, protecting citizens and infrastructure, pursuing and investigating terrorists across borders and minimising the consequences of terror attacks (Council of the European Union 2005b). This broad commitment materialises in specific policy areas such as the criminalisation of terrorist behaviour, intelligence exchange or firearms regulation. However, across these expanding counterterrorism instruments, a divide is visible between the growing requirement for cooperation and the resistance of (certain) member states to a European approach, with the latter privileging national sovereignty in security matters over multilateral EU solutions. Some EU member states even sought to close off borders. For example, France has fought repeatedly to retain the right to carry out internal EU border checks, whilst Hungary has tried to seal off the EU’s external borders. Others, like Germany, appear more hesitant to call into question fundamental European freedoms. Internal and external pressures (from the recent migration crisis to a recovering economy and the rise of populist governments), which affect EU countries differently, further exacerbate these differences.

Security is a complex issue, especially with an open-border Schengen area and freedom of movement. Security matters are traditionally closely related to sovereignty. Hence, cooperation and integration in these matters are highly sensitive and contested.
This report seeks to explore the division between EU member states on how to fight international terrorism. It focuses on two overarching and overlapping divides: first, contrasting the EU cooperative approach with a more inward-looking, nationalist approach; and second, addressing the tensions between security and liberty (e.g., privacy, religious freedom and freedom of movement). In order to explore the nature and depth of these divisions, the points of divergence and interstate confrontations, we employ a comparative case study of national responses to EU frameworks. This narrows the enquiry to three policy areas and the instruments linked to them: data and intelligence exchange; free movement and border control; and the prevention of radicalisation. Germany and France were selected for further analysis as both countries have been subject to terrorist attacks in recent months yet exhibited disparate reactions, with France leaning towards national and unilateral security-focused solutions and Germany more prone to European actions and the preservation of key freedoms.

"Security matters are traditionally closely related to sovereignty. Hence, cooperation and integration in these matters are highly sensitive and contested."

A central issue seems to be the member states’ reluctance to fully adhere to EU frameworks, instead seeking exceptions, enforcing restrictive interpretations, or even acting unilaterally despite common policies. The following sections contrast national governments’ counterterrorism policies with relevant EU frameworks. The second section looks at the stances taken by France and Germany in relation to data and intelligence exchange. The third section explores their positions toward EU free movement and border policies. The fourth section discusses the two countries’ approaches to deradicalisation and its challenges. The final section identifies potential policy implications of our findings.

INTELLIGENCE SHARING: UNILATERAL INITIATIVES VERSUS JOINT INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES

The fundamental divide in approaches to cross-border intelligence sharing concerns both the willingness to cooperate as well as the channels and the methods that are used for that purpose. Intelligence sharing may be conducted via the established fora of international governmental organisations, such as the relevant bodies of the EU, NATO, or the UN, or bilateral or multilateral agreements. In the case of the EU, European intelligence sharing agreements are meant to express a “more European” approach, while individual arrangements represent more unilateral approaches, translating as “less Europe”. Additionally, intelligence sharing may be influenced by something which is widely perceived as a security versus liberty trade-off. This part demonstrates how country-specific factors play a role in the approach to intelligence sharing between France and Germany.
Intelligence sharing within the EU has evolved over the years, following ever closer integration in the field of common foreign and security policy. Still, various factors hinder information sharing: from human error to bureaucratic hurdles, practical and legal restrictions and even distrust among security services of different countries. Distrust within the European intelligence community may incentivise countries to form bilateral or multilateral intelligence sharing arrangements. The former head of the French general directorate for internal security (DGSE) explains that mistrust in the intelligence sphere notably concerns the divide between old and new member states, and more specifically former Warsaw Pact countries and Soviet republics (Financial Times 2016). Most of the older member states view the US as their primary partner in intelligence cooperation.

"Most of the older member states view the US as their primary partner in intelligence cooperation."

Bearing in mind this reticence to accept a pan-European approach to intelligence sharing, calls from some policy-makers to increase intelligence cooperation among member states and eventually structure Europol as the EU’s version of the FBI are unlikely to bear fruit soon. Besides distrust, there are additional political and cultural hurdles standing in the way of a more centralised and powerful Europol; German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière said, for example, that he cannot imagine Germany giving up its national sovereignty in this particular field (Politico 2015).

France and Germany’s differing contexts with regard to intelligence sharing can be traced back to their security service organisations. In France, a more centralised state than Germany, oversight of the security services falls on the executive, while in Germany it falls on parliament. Also, due to Germany’s historical legacy which includes both WWII and the GDR, its citizens embody a strong antimilitarist sentiment and a profound awareness of human rights: “There are major concerns with German information being used for purposes that are considered unethical or illegal at home” (Mahoney, Mladenovic, Molina, Scher, Stern & Zoia 2013: 28), a significant factor balancing security and liberty.

It is not completely clear to what extent the position that a national government takes with regard to cooperation on fighting terrorism influences its level of intelligence sharing between security services. In the case of France, the political leadership’s desire for a more national approach in tackling terrorism, as was the case with its prolonged state of emergency and the introduction of continuous border checks, may result in less enthusiasm for more Europe in the intelligence sharing sphere. Nevertheless, even in the case of Germany, strong support of the government for more Europe, does not necessarily translate into greater trust and increased sharing of German secret service (BND) intelligence with its European peers. This is currently even more pertinent in the context of the migration crisis. Mistrust between different security services seems to be so deeply rooted that BND has even spied on its French colleagues in the recent past (Spiegel Online 2016).
BORDER CONTROL MECHANISMS:
MIGRATORY PRESSURE VERSUS TERRORIST THREAT

There is increasing tension among member states, as well as on the level of domestic politics, between security concerns in the face of transnational terrorism and freedom of movement in Europe as guaranteed under the EU treaties and facilitated by the Schengen agreement. Two of the deadliest terrorist attacks carried out on European soil, the November 2015 attacks in Paris and the December 2016 attack on a Berlin Christmas market, included cross-border mobility in their preparations and aftermaths. EU border security and management are regulated by the 2006 Schengen Borders Code (SBC). Germany and France both introduced and currently maintain controls on borders in the Schengen zone in accordance with the SBC.

Germany first reintroduced controls on all of its land borders in November 2015 during the refugee and migration crisis, due to the increased influx of asylum seekers who had not been properly registered upon their entry into the union. Checks at the land border with Austria were renewed several times in line with recommendations of the Council. General elections were held in September 2017 and security—including surveillance, data exchange with other member states, a common European asylum system and coordinated deradicalisation programs (Carstens 2017)—quickly emerged as central topics in the campaign. In general, Germany upholds its commitment to Schengen and free movement in Europe and the government favours further integration in tackling the challenges of migration and terrorism over national regulations. However, Berlin has also stated that it would maintain checks as long as the situation at the external borders was critical (DIE ZEIT 2017).

"Mistrust between different security services seems to be so deeply rooted that BND has even spied on its French colleagues in the recent past."

As the first terrorist attack on French soil with transnational implications, the attack on the offices of the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January 2015 did not lead to the introduction of border controls by the government. In accordance with the SBC, France introduced border checks in the context of foreseeable events, namely the UN Climate Change Conference held November 30th—December 12th, 2015, in Paris. However, after the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13th, 2015, President François Hollande declared a state of emergency in France, making it possible to unilaterally introduce border checks. Since then, the state of emergency has been prolonged several times. France’s new President Emmanuel Macron and his government seek to end the state of emergency by integrating several of its exceptional measures into common law through new antiterrorism legislation restricting civil liberties such as freedom of movement (Piquet 2017). Overall though, Paris too favours closer cooperation and integration.
on the EU level for combatting terrorism and maintaining security on the union’s external borders over unilateral checks inside the Schengen zone.

The Schengen agreement and with it freedom of movement within Europe lies at the heart of EU integration. The Commission repeatedly emphasised the utmost importance of restoring normal functioning within the Schengen area for the union as a whole (European Commission 2017). A common EU migration and asylum policy has proven a more pressing need than even protection from terrorism; in the case of border controls, the Schengen agreement and Dublin regulations as they currently stand put peripheral member states, such as Greece and Italy, under unsustainable pressure.

DERADICALISATION POLICIES: FRENCH QUEST FOR SECURITY VERSUS GERMAN DESIRE FOR LIBERTY

Divisions between member states in fighting terrorism can be observed in the sphere of deradicalisation policies, with some countries emphasising hard security measures and others prioritising human rights. The EU strategy for combating radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism, adopted in 2005 and revisited in 2008, set the basis for the policies and measures aimed at disrupting terrorist recruitment networks and preventing the spread of extremist ideologies that cause radicalisation, both online and in prisons (Council of the European Union 2005a). However, deradicalisation policy measures such as surveillance of potential terrorists or closing down extremist websites are praised as essential in preventing terrorist attacks, yet criticised for destroying civil liberties.

Germany and France are usually seen as having very different approaches to counterterrorism in general and deradicalisation policies in particular. France is an advocate for more security and more repressive measures, whereas Germany is seen as a strong supporter of civil liberties and softer approaches to the implementation of security measures.

Even before the deadly terrorist attacks in 2015, the issue of radicalisation has always been high on the political agenda in France. For instance, as early as 2013 the French government launched a hotline through which citizens could report suspicious changes in behaviour (Vinocur 2016). In 2014 France passed a law that enables the shutdown of websites promoting radicalisation and jihadism without judicial mandate (McPartland 2016). Following the January 2015 terrorist attacks, deradicalisation policy measures have been further enhanced. For instance, France launched a #StopJihadism online counterpropaganda campaign (Gouvernement.fr 2015) and started to monitor would-be terrorists by tapping phones and emails without judicial oversight (The Guardian 2015).

Germany’s initial approach to the implementation of deradicalisation policy measures was more reserved. The prevailing stance was to “keep a cool head” and not to abandon regular security practices in order to preserve democratic values and human rights (Spiegel Online 2015). However, following the November 2015 terrorist attacks in France, Germany called for enhanced deradicalisation policies (Deutsche Welle 2015). For instance, the government proposed using electronic ankle tags for terrorism suspects before trial (Huggler 2017). Furthermore, both countries started closer cooperation and
agreed to implement highly contested deradicalisation policy measures such as the weakening of encryption standards and revision of the ePrivacy directive (Business Insider 2016). The French and German ministers of interior also presented a joint initiative for fighting radicalisation at the European level (Maj 2016).

Our analysis reveals that even though Germany generally favours a less strict approach than France, both countries have clearly expressed their willingness to cooperate in this highly contested policy area. The initially lower-key German position probably arose out of legitimacy concerns raised by human rights NGOs. Some deradicalisation instruments have been criticised for being ineffective and bringing contradictory results.

Even if reflecting the EU’s strategies, France’s deradicalisation policies have received harsh criticism from NGOs for polarising society, stigmatising certain groups and inciting further radicalisation (Amnesty International 2016), as well as curbing civil liberties (Human Rights Watch 2016) and normalising emergency security measures (Human Rights Watch 2017). Countries with a problematic past and strong human rights commitments, such as Germany, appear more reluctant to adopt restrictive measures if they risk facing strong criticism from civil society organisations for being illiberal, breaching human rights and destroying civil liberties. It may stop them from overtly engaging with more radical policy options. However, with rising right-wing populism within parties such as Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU), stricter deradicalisation policy measures have been gaining political traction (Reuters 2017). Hence, the two countries that are often seen as the drivers of the EU security policy formulation and implementation do not differ as much in counterterrorism approaches as is often portrayed.

CONCLUSION

In the fight against international terrorism in Europe, two distinct divisions emerge from the analysis of the French and German approaches: the EU’s multilateral approach versus a nationalist approach, and security versus freedom. The fault lines, however, are not always where they are assumed to be and may at times have more to do with packaging than with substance.

Intelligence sharing

Both divisions are clearly present in the area of intelligence sharing:

• The national versus European approach manifests via France’s reluctance to use already existing institutional mechanisms for data sharing. Concerns have been raised over the intelligence sharing system’s security and operational reliability. Prevailing mistrust combined with political sensitivity pushes to make bilateral agreements that are seen as a more effective and safer option. Due to the lack of cooperation, the EU’s existing intelligence framework is already seen as faulty;
The security versus freedom divide appears as a contradiction between the need to exchange information about EU border crossings and individual rights to privacy and personal data protection. Germany is an example of an EU member state attempting to find a balance between personal freedoms and a certain level of intelligence sharing that continues to benefit national security. This divide is critical when developing the next steps in cooperative intelligence sharing because EU citizens must feel that the measures taken are not encroaching upon their personal freedoms.

**Border control**

In relation to border management and freedom of movement, the two divisions can also be observed, albeit with more ambiguous implications:

- The national versus European divide manifests as countries’ attempts to regain control of their national borders. Although both Germany and France have acted in accordance with the Schengen agreement when introducing internal border checks, their de facto reactions created a new status quo that harms the open border ideal of Schengen. The proposed Back to Schengen roadmap, attempting to restore a fully functioning Schengen system, has been slow to respond to the pressure on the external borders created by the migration crisis. This has resulted in increased security checks at internal EU borders. Although these decisions are in line with EU policy, they continue to fracture the already sensitive border issues and perpetuate mistrust of the EU border management system;
- The security versus freedom divide exhibits itself in the complications of finding a way to effectively control borders while ensuring the free movement of people. Support for more security along the external borders of the Schengen zone is expected to strengthen freedom of movement inside the EU, whereas the introduction of internal border checks challenges the EU principle of free movement. In the face of transnational threats, the value of freedom and of security has become a matter of debate.

**Deradicalisation**

In the deradicalisation policy area, the national versus European divide is not significant; however, a clear divide between security and freedom can be identified:

- Germany and France are both willing to cooperate and actively promote common European initiatives toward deradicalisation. Here the divide results more from the unwillingness to adopt controversial policy measures along the security versus freedom divide;
- The security-freedom divide is evident in the area of deradicalisation, with France presenting a security-oriented approach and Germany advocating for a human
rights-oriented position. France has been more proactive in implementing the EU agenda on fighting terrorism, whilst Germany has taken a softer approach and has been more sceptical toward implementing deradicalisation policy measures. As the case of Germany has revealed, criticism from human rights NGOs plays a crucial role. Accusations of human rights infringements or the destruction of civil liberties may stop countries from fully adopting common European policy.

**Recommendations**

The possibilities for overcoming differences in these three policy areas through the agency of the EU can be shaped into several policy recommendations:

- A single European identity management system that fulfils all national security requirements should be developed to encourage all member states to use the system;
- The Back to Schengen roadmap should be redesigned and incorporate all member states’ concerns;
- A mechanism for consultation and cooperation between the EU institutions and human rights NGOs should be established.

The two divisions—the national versus European approach and the security versus liberties conundrum—have created challenges for the EU when addressing transnational terrorism in Europe. These are not necessarily divides that can be bridged through one particular policy being implemented but rather require rebuilding trust in the EU security framework. There is a need for increased multilateral cooperation, further security integration and essentially more Europe. This path toward deeper integration need not come at the expense of EU citizens’ personal freedoms. A collective security approach involving close cooperation with and between member states, with a commitment to implementation and to the value of individual freedoms, is the way to bridge these divides in Europe.

**REFERENCES**


In fighting terrorism, security and civil liberties should go hand in hand

Jan Robert Suesser
(Executive Board Member)

The French Human Rights League (LDH) organises close to ten thousand members to act in defence of human liberties and civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. As an independent civil society actor, it is involved in fighting for effective access to rights for all people and against racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination.
The Central European University students’ essay focuses on three selected policies currently implemented in Europe: data and intelligence exchange; free movement and border control; and prevention of radicalisation. The analysis concentrates on French and German approaches, emphasising their European dimension. In considering their arguments, my focus will be the rights perspective.

Let us begin with four considerations. First, policies fighting terrorism are often presented and seen as technical. In fact, in public debate and policy-making, fighting terrorism is connected to everything from immigration to “exclusive identities”, framed in countries’ specific histories and ultimately reflected in their national political cultures.

Second, any analysis of EU policies addressing terror threats should not be considered independently of the overall challenges facing the EU, how the EU project is progressing or how policies are decided and implemented in order to avoid improper conclusions and barely implementable advice.

Third, while terror is primarily portrayed as an external threat in most member states, some are confronted with a home-grown terror threat as in the 1960s and 1970s with terror acts by the far right in France related to the independence of Algeria, destabilisation strategies from the far right and far left in Italy, and pro-independence struggles in the Basque region and Northern Ireland. Today’s home-grown terrorism calls for policies with short- and long-term perspectives addressing respective national characteristics.

Fourth, I shall argue that the democracy and human rights perspectives mentioned in the paper must be fully considered in both analysis and policy proposals.

The first policy examined in the paper, data and intelligence exchange, is usually presented as establishing a balance between security and civil liberties. Most often, we are confronted with the singular viewpoint that attacks which could have been prevented with access to personal data are not acceptable when in fact in a democracy what is unacceptable is that the space for civil liberty be defined by a solely security perspective. The public debate deserves more than the presentation of privacy violation as the unique way forward in tackling security issues. Why is a comparison between targeted methods versus probabilistic analysis and their respective impacts on personal data protection never presented in public discussion?

More broadly, we must reject the whole idea of establishing a balance between security and respect for human rights, as in democratic societies securities (social, physical, judicial) and human rights enjoyed by the people progress and regress at the same time. Effective protection of civil rights did not hamper action when independent judiciary bodies were not bypassed in preventive actions against terror threats (as they are now in French legislation). Keeping the judiciary at the centre of every such process is crucial for democracy.

So too is data exchange between countries a matter of public concern and not only the purview of intelligence services. We witnessed the UK government’s anger when intelligence information was leaked by US counterparts after the Manchester attack. This event raises a key question: what values guide the work of institutions? Democracy cannot survive without a satisfactory answer.
With regard to the second policy examined, free movement and border control, a number of politicians and decision-makers deliberately mix terror threats with migration issues. Both issues concern human rights: the right to live in safety and the right to seek asylum. Placing them in opposition to one another fatally threatens the values on which European societies stand.

Dismissing the welcome of asylum seekers under the guise of safety is only a regressive connection between two separate issues. Terrorists can use migratory routes to enter the EU. But no one can seriously argue that terrorists would no longer enter the EU were these routes closed.

To control borders against terrorist threats (as well as to control them against football hooligans) is not in and of itself an infringement to the right to freedom. When such controls are targeted and an independent judiciary both authorises the limitation and controls its implementation, we have a framework under which free movement is considered the rule. Following an attack or intelligence requiring immediate preventive action, governments can call for temporary limitations (as, for example, the 12-day state of emergency France proclaimed after the November 2015 attacks). Democrats know that such a move carries risks to civil liberties that must be addressed from the start. It is now obvious that the checks and balances provided by the institutional framework contained weaknesses, leaving room for populist discourses and lessening full respect for human rights.

In reference to political cultures existing in Europe mentioned earlier, I cannot help bringing together two distant moments possibly illustrating the strength of the “isolationism” argument to protect against threats inside Central European societies: the locking up of HIV/AIDS patients in the 1980s and early 1990s and the closing of borders to asylum seekers today, even if in both cases, these countries were and are almost unaffected. In contrast, in Western European societies then and today, the “isolationism” argument was and is much more controversial, opposite views being largely represented in society. Does this reveal a societal divide in Europe or is it just by coincidence?

In any case, the challenge the EU’s basic right to free movement is facing is not to bend to political discourses that do not have as their compass the full protection of all human rights for all.

The final policy examined, the prevention of home-grown radicalism, is complex as it encompasses manifold components. Thus, limiting attention to the sole issue of people who would join in terrorist acts misses the point.

The faith many people have in the values our societies claim as their backbone is challenged by racism, discrimination, exclusion and inequality. People feeling relegated to the status of second-class citizens are not terrorists. Yet home-grown radicalisation feeds on the gap between claimed values and lived realities. Severing this root for radicalisation, a medium- to long-term challenge, is crucial — not to mention the general centrality of social cohesion in European societies! Part of preventing radicalisation in our societies involves effective access to fundamental rights for all and keeping the levels of inequality socially acceptable.
A larger and much-needed policy-making approach would aim at eliminating situations where the poor compete with one another over access to basic rights (housing, education, health services, etc.) that our societies should provide for all. People living in such competition may be primed to approve regressive discourses denying the legitimacy of access to rights for those seen as “different”. Breaking such a vicious circle is crucial if we are serious about social cohesion.

Diverse policies targeting the most radicalised individuals require an informed public debate fed by solid facts: first, to avoid the nonsensical idea that one size/policy fits all; second, to avoid a situation where the failure of some policies presented to the public leads to the absurd idea that the terrorist threats facing our societies cannot be addressed in a civilised manner.

As a Frenchman, I always apply our national motto — “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” — to societal issues. As a European, I consider the same values come with the words democracy, equality, solidarity and inclusiveness for all people who share this common space. These words must drive our European future, to connect our common values to the specific issue of fighting terrorism and ultimately to judge in full any related policies.
FORTRESS
EUROPE
Reconciling generational perceptions for the revival of the European idea

Authors
Desislava Filipova
Kristina Lazarova
Filip Paunov
Boyan Petrov
Lora Yordanova

Supervisor
Asst. Prof. Desislava Karaasenova
This paper explores perceptions of the EU as well as of sociopolitical and economic phenomena in Europe among two groups of European citizens: millennials and baby boomers. It examines public opinion surveys and depicts the underlying reasons of the attitudinal divide discernible between these generations. The authors argue that shared values provide a unifying foundation and propose an initiative that could foster intergenerational dialogue to engage these citizens in a more pro-European direction.

It was once said that the glory of the young lies in their strength and the splendour of the old in their wisdom. Today, however, it is easy to feel as if neither of these qualities is properly utilised to better deal with the unprecedented difficulties we face. Instead, differences such as social background, ethnicity, religion, nationality and age are employed as means of division—not only for political ends, but also as a brake on progress. Such progress can only be achieved through fair and open dialogue where the emergence of the truth leads to the prosperity of all. For the first time in its history, the very existence of the European project has been thrown into question. The combination of crises which have taken place in the last decade now endanger the union which has guaranteed peace, prosperity and freedom in Europe for sixty years. What is more, the most dangerous threat to its existence dwells not outside, but rather deep within. As a result of Brexit and the rise of populism, the veil has been lifted only to reveal what that danger truly is—a generational divide between European citizens. In order to better understand this division, we decided to focus on the attitudes of two generations in Europe: baby boomers, the ones who shaped the way the EU looks and functions today; and millennials, the ones who must forge its future. Taking a picture of this generational divide is important in order to uncover what it could potentially spell for the future and ultimately what can be done to reconcile attitudes in the name of a better Europe.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE EU

Drawing on data from the Standard Eurobarometer 85 (European Commission 2016), the section below provides a picture of the perceptions, attitudes and values of baby boomers and millennials in the EU. Overall, the data indicate a double-digit generational gap in every survey question.

The survey shows that the European Union conjures positive feelings for less than half of its overall population. Nevertheless, it is perceived much more positively by the younger generation. The public in general see free movement, peace, the euro and student exchange programmes such as Erasmus as the most positive EU achievements. Along generational lines, however, these results are ranked differently. While for baby boomers peace is the EU’s most positive result (60%, ahead of free movement at 47%), for millennials, it is free movement (58%, ahead of peace with 52%). Furthermore, student exchange programmes such as Erasmus garner 30% of the millennials’ vote and take the third place before the euro, compared to just 21% of baby boomers who rank it in fourth place after the euro. While the baby boomers acknowledge the benefits of free

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movement, it is natural that their perceptions of the EU as an entity guaranteeing peace would prevail. This generation grew up in times when the devastating consequences of WWII were still strongly felt and it is through their countries’ engagement to the values upheld by the EU as a political construct that their societies were able to heal and achieve economic recovery and prosperity. Although the millennials also hold dear the achievement of peace across the European continent, the opportunities for and the benefits of educational and work mobility have moulded different priorities.

Millennials also feel a stronger sense of European citizenship. When different levels of citizenship were explored, the data showed that a little over half of all respondents in this age group have a combined sense of national and European citizenship and define themselves as “nationality and European”. However, while a third of young people define themselves only in terms of national citizenship (33%), 41% of the older respondents select this option. It seems that members of the older generation remain within the constraints of their national identity, looking for security in an ever-changing and globalising world. The young, on the other hand, seem to redefine the boundaries of their identity to include citizenship on a larger, supranational scale. Furthermore, when considering citizenship, we cannot ignore knowledge of one’s rights as an EU citizen as they go hand in hand. The data show a double-digit generational gap in this respect. Arguably, insufficient knowledge of one’s rights may breed euroscepticism within the older generation. Satisfaction about how democracy works in the EU also prevails in the younger generation. Young people are more supportive of the idea of more decision-making at the EU level—57% of millennials compared to 48% of baby boomers. Meanwhile, although we observe that less than half of the young express trust in the EU, there nevertheless remains a double-digit generational gap in this respect.

"Half of Europeans are optimistic about the future of Europe, though there is still a wide divide between millennials and baby boomers."

Demographic analysis shows that most millennials hold the opinion that EU member states share common values (56%), but only 48% of baby boomers think so. There is also a discernible generational gap with respect to values that matter most to respondents personally. Although both baby boomers and millennials choose peace, human rights and respect for human life as the values they hold dearest, they rank them differently. Baby boomers put peace in first place while, for millennials, it is human rights that take precedence. It is important to note here that, generation-wise, there is overall wide agreement that their countries are better positioned in today’s world and are better able to withstand the challenges of globalisation by being part of the EU. Half of Europeans are optimistic about the future of Europe, though there is still a wide divide between millennials and baby boomers.
ATTITUDES ABOUT MIGRATION

As immigration is the leading concern at the European level, according to Standard Eurobarometer 85 (European Commission 2016), exploring citizens’ perceptions along generational lines can contribute to a more comprehensive picture of current attitudes. Surveys that explore generational perceptions of migration show that negative attitudes are especially prevalent among the older generation. Standard Eurobarometer 83 indicates that migration from other EU countries is seen positively by 58% of millennials, but evokes positive feelings for only 48% of baby boomers (European Commission 2015). Migration from outside the EU is viewed more negatively by both generations, yet there is a double-digit generational difference in attitudes in this respect, too. The European Social Survey reveals a wide double-digit gap between the millennials’ favourable attitudes toward migration and the baby boomers’ negative sentiments—more than half of respondents aged 16–34 would allow migration from poorer countries outside Europe compared to about a third of respondents aged 65+ (Heath & Richards 2016).

A Pew Global Attitudes survey shows similar generational divides in Europe, with the gap widest in France, where 54% of those aged 50–64 at the time expressed strong anti-immigrant feelings compared to just 24% of millennials (Pew Research Center 2004). That survey also shows that older Western Europeans exhibit significantly higher levels of cultural chauvinism than their younger counterparts. The survey reveals that older Western Europeans have reservations about growing global interconnectedness and are much more worried about shielding their way of life from foreign influence than the young. This trend is most obvious in France, Germany and the UK, where older people are twice as likely as young people to worry about erosion of their way of life. In Eastern European countries, people in general show high cultural chauvinism across all age groups. Although the generational differences are not as sharp or as consistent as
those in the West, however, the trend that millennials are less likely than older citizens to exhibit cultural chauvinism or as many reservations about global interconnectedness continues. As Axtmann (1998) asserts, processes of global interconnectedness and interdependence have unfolded along with processes of disintegration and fragmentation of the political, economic and cultural structures of the 20th century. Arguably, the new socioeconomic realities these processes have created elicit different responses in citizens of different generations. While the older generation grew up in an environment before years of mass migration and is much less used to ethno-cultural and racial diversity, younger generations are generally more tolerant of multiculturalism as they are used to a diverse mix of ethnicities. Heightened mobility and the internet have opened new pathways breaking down preconceptions and prejudices and offering numerous possibilities to bridge cultural gaps (Corvi, Bigi & Ng 2007).

Figure 2. Created from data in Pew Global Attitudes Survey 2002/3 (Pew Research Center 2004)

THE CASE OF EASTERN EUROPE

An integral part of the European project is its aspiration for unity through integration and commitment toward a common future. In practice, however, the EU has faced challenges in the integration of Eastern European countries. Overcoming the cultural, economic and social discrepancies manifesting as a result of almost half a century of East-West division will be indispensable to the future success of a united Europe. But in order to do so successfully, knowledge and understanding must be the leading tools in bridging the existing gaps.

The following section draws on data from a 2009 Pew Global Attitudes survey exploring a wide array of political, social and economic trends in Central and Eastern Europe. The data show that the post-communist generation is generally much more
satisfied with the current state of democracy and much more strongly endorses the benefits of capitalism than the generation which grew up behind the Iron Curtain (Pew Research Center 2009). The age gap in the attitudes of millennials and baby boomers to democracy and capitalism is especially evident in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Lithuania, where generational divides are in the double digits.

"The age gap in the attitudes of millennials and baby boomers to democracy and capitalism is especially evident in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Lithuania [...]

The post-communist generation also differs from the older generation with regard to one’s individual relationship with the state (Pew Research Center 2010). The generational split in attitudes about individualism and freedom from state interference is in the double digits in most of the countries surveyed. However, when it comes to supporting democratic institutions and freedoms, a generational divide cannot be discerned across the region. Poland is the only case of a generational gap with regards to democratic values. Freedom of speech, honest multiparty elections, freedom of the press and a civilian-controlled military gain much higher support among younger Poles. Answers to the question whether a democratic form of government or a strong leader is better able to solve a country’s problems show that young Poles and Lithuanians place much more confidence in a democratic government—unlike Hungary and Bulgaria, where preference for a strong leader is prevalent among all respondents.

The EU enjoys high levels of favourability among all generations in Eastern Europe. According to a Pew Global Attitudes survey conducted in the spring of 2017, the Poles (74%) and the Hungarians (67%) are the institution’s strongest supporters (Stokes, Wike & Manevich 2017). Still, Hungary is a notable example about existing generational differences in attitudes toward the EU—a gap of 18% between the youngest and oldest citizens. A survey conducted by the Bertelsmann Stiftung (2017) indicates that younger Eastern Europeans strongly back the EU, acknowledge its role as a peacekeeper and appreciate the opportunities it provides for study and employment.

Considering the data presented in the above sections, although we discern differences—in some cases quite significant—by country and by region, we can still perceive some general trends in generational perceptions across the EU. On the one hand, older people see the EU mostly as a peacekeeper and a structure providing economic and political stability. They display higher levels of chauvinism and see migration eroding the European way of life. Overall, they are more eurosceptic and demonstrate higher attachment to national identity. On the other hand, young people perceive the EU as an opportunity. They support the European project because of its guaranteed freedom of movement, EU policies that have contributed to a higher quality of life for European citizens
and the euro. For them human rights, tolerance and solidarity are the values that most define good citizenship. Younger people demonstrate a higher sense of EU citizenship and show more euro-optimistic attitudes.

**HARNESSING INTELLECTUAL POWERS IN A PRO-EUROPEAN DIRECTION**

Although different generations may hold values and perceptions that do not match in many ways, what we strongly believe is that the right step toward overcoming generational divides can only be achieved by searching for common ground. If we wish to gain a realistic perspective and face better odds of dealing with the challenges before us, we must first establish knowledge of the things which bring us together before we focus on the things driving us apart.

When asked about what the EU means to them personally, respondents in all age groups invariably rank the freedom to travel, study and work first, followed by the common currency, cultural diversity and peace (European Commission 2016). Moreover, Standard Eurobarometer 83 shows that the values which matter most to Europeans are peace, human rights and respect for human life, democracy, individual freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance and the rule of law (European Commission 2015). In addition to shared values, the survey indicates that there are other unifying features such as culture, the common market, sports and geography. This framework of commonalities can be used as a solid foundation in the process of reconciling interests and overcoming divisions. Furthermore, we suggest this process start with dialogue, because prosperity for all generations can be achieved neither through isolation nor polarisation of social discourse, but rather through honest and fair discussion of the most pressing issues that impact us all, as difficult as that may sometimes be.

As our purpose is to bridge the gap we identified in the perceptions of millennials and baby boomers toward the EU and other sociopolitical and economic phenomena in contemporary Europe, we focus on providing opportunities for members of these generations to develop understanding of alternative personal perspectives, attitudes and values. Keeping in mind the trends of demographic ageing in the EU (European Commission 2017) and, in this respect, the power of the older generations to chart the course of society, both at the national and the EU level, it is particularly significant to raise baby boomer awareness of the future envisaged by millennials.

Therefore, we suggest an initiative which would bring together partners of different generations and ethnicities to work together on resolving challenges of contemporary society. Our specific proposal is a short-term mobility programme where millennials and baby boomers exchange theme-focused and solution-oriented visits. This mobility programme entails two strands. On the one hand, the guests would become involved in their hosts’ work and social activities, thereby experiencing firsthand a different social life and unfamiliar cultural and historical heritage as well as enhancing their professional skills. On the other hand, guest and host work together to propose unconventional and
pragmatic solutions to problems at a local or pan-European level. It is our conviction that this enhanced interaction between the two generations, their closer cooperation, their constructive dialogue and the inevitable compromises made to provide feasible ideas taking into account the interests of all have the power to reshape attitudes. Furthermore, participation in such an exchange would foster both the interest and involvement of EU citizens of different generations in policy-making.

We suggest that a consortium of NGOs be involved in the implementation and administration of this intergenerational mobility programme. We envisage an online platform where national NGOs register preselected candidates then matched according to specific interests, occupations, levels of professional experience, education and languages spoken. The administrative role of the NGOs will entail not only participant selection but also coordination of the process, intra- and internationally, assistance to both guest and host and mediation where necessary. This consortium of NGOs will be tasked with identifying overarching challenges, of a local or an EU dimension, to be addressed by the programme’s participants. The participants will present the proposals generated first to their own communities. The purpose of these dissemination events is twofold. On the one hand, they will extend the discussion to involve members of the participants’ communities, thus broadening the outreach of the exchange; on the other hand, it will promote the programme. The proposals will then be submitted to the NGOs which will refer the pool of ideas to responsible local or EU decision-making bodies and will also provide advocacy for the adoption of these policies. We also recommend financial incentives to stimulate prospective participants’ engagement in the programme.

"Extending the reach of mobility programmes to larger segments of the population could only be beneficial [...]"

As the impact of the Erasmus+ exchange has proven very positive in terms of adding value to the educational dimension by developing students’ interpersonal and intercultural competences as well as, perhaps even more importantly, by promoting a European identity (European Commission 2014), the initiative we suggest here could bear similar positive results. Extending the reach of mobility programmes to larger segments of the population could only be beneficial because participation and hands-on citizen engagement have the potential to reinforce the spirit of belonging to a shared community and to strengthen support for the EU. Furthermore, as solidarity is a key value promoted by the EU, participation in such an intergenerational mobility programme could be an important element in the process of building social cohesion and, in this sense, an important step in reconciling generational perceptions for the revival of the European idea.

A bridge requires years to build but can last for centuries to come. To invoke the spirit of John F. Kennedy, let us embrace the appeal, “Ask not what Europe can do for you, but what you can do for Europe!” and together build a bridge between the EU’s generations.
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Red House Centre for Culture and Debate’s mission is to develop the independent art scene, inspire civic participation and critical thinking and integrate the most vulnerable social groups. To fulfil its mission, the centre organises events and develops programmes in three major areas: society and politics, arts and culture and social practices and psychodrama.
The authors of “Reconciling generational perceptions for the revival of the European idea” highlight several important issues in the European Union that currently require alternative, smart solutions. The day after the pro-Brexit vote, the accusation lodged by the youth of Great Britain—“You have stolen our future”—again illustrated one long-standing problem of an ageing Europe.

However, the perception divide between old and young highlighted in the essay is neither new nor exceptional. It is a logical historical phenomenon. The specific European phenomenon adding a different perspective to this generational divide is the demographic crisis related to ageing. According to the European Commission’s “The 2015 ageing report: underlying assumptions and projection methodologies”, by 2060 nearly 30% of Europe’s population will be 65 and over, up from 18% in 2014. During the same period, the continent’s old-age dependency ratio (i.e., people aged 65 and over relative to those aged 15–64) will rise from 27.8% to over 50% (European Commission 2014).

In their contribution, the Sofia University students analyse the results of Eurobarometer 85, identifying a general trend of elderly disengagement with the EU. As a result, we face a significant number of EU voters who could choose to stop or to slow the process of EU integration.

I agree with the authors that respect for different generational perceptions is an important value worth striving for. Yet, personally I find the more pressing issue the development of instruments for sociopolitical involvement of the elderly. When one’s opinion is sought and appreciated, there is greater readiness to participate constructively in the democratic process instead of vote against it.

According to Eurobarometer 85, the number of baby boomers knowing their EU rights, expressing trust in EU and satisfied by EU democracy is almost half that of millennials (European Commission 2016). Despite these differences, there is an evident lack of programs aimed at involving senior citizens in political life, giving them the ability to express their opinions on future processes outside of electoral politics. Instead, most EU programs promoting political participation are designed to focus on the young.

The elderly population is included in EU analyses and strategies mainly with regard to pension systems, economics and health insurance coverage. There are several programs targeting lifelong education or healthy living, but no one is investigating how to involve the ageing population in political discussions about the future on either the national or EU level. For example, the trans-European network for people over 65, AGE Platform Europe, is funded by the rights, equality and citizenship programme 2014-20. The program promotes equity between and rights for all citizens and does not implicitly focus on political participation for the elderly.

At the same time, according to an EU Council declaration, “Active ageing and solidarity between generations require: […] participation across a person’s lifetime by ensuring opportunities and access to […] political, social, recreational and cultural activities; [and] volunteering, which helps to maintain social networks and reduce isolation.” The declaration puts special focus on the “recognition of the values of all age groups and their contribution to society, thus promoting positive perceptions and attitudes toward all age groups; engaging them in decision-making (policy formulation and implementation),
paying special attention to their opinions and concerns and giving them a voice in re-
search processes that may affect them” (Council of the European Union 2012).

Following this declaration, however, little has been done on the EU level to im-
plement the recommendations via concrete programs or policies. For example, in the
framework of one of the EU’s main social programs, PROGRESS axis of EaSI, the ageing
population is still viewed mainly in socioeconomic terms.

With this in mind, the students propose concrete ideas to implement the recom-
mendations of the declaration. Their proposal meets the following recommendations:
transmission of older people’s knowledge and skills to younger generations and vice
versa should be encouraged; measures encouraging cooperation between generations
should be promoted; and negative perceptions and stereotypes between generations
should be eliminated.

Forging intergenerational connections through shared residences or shared activi-
ties already has successful examples in various EU countries, implemented by local NGOs,
institutions or businesses. The website age-platform.eu presents several good practices,
such as the senior residence Humanitas in Deventer, the Netherlands, which provides
free accommodation for students who commit to spending at least thirty hours every
month with their older co-residents.

In Italy, the project “Grandparents online, everyone’s young at the post office” as-
sists senior citizens in accessing public administration services available via computer,
tablet and smartphone. The project is designed for older adults and lessons ranging from
the ABCs of computers to navigating online services are taught by university students.

These and many other good examples show that there are already brilliant and di-
verse ideas for engaging senior citizens in activities that give them opportunities to be
active citizens and exchange viewpoints with young people at the same time.

The program described in the Sofia essay is one of them. Their concrete proposal
is more of a pilot project and less of a framework program to comprehensively cover
the EU’s elderly. The students propose that young visitors and their elderly hosts work
 together on common projects related to the EU’s future. While this subject could be in-
teresting for some baby boomers, it is unlikely that it will have broad appeal.

The students’ concrete proposal offers an original method for promoting intergen-
erational exchange as well as understanding and respect for different perceptions, values
and interests. Their proposal, along with others on the same topic, could be funded un-
der a specific program for adult involvement in sociopolitical life. Such a program could
achieve both a general framework and specific aims through different projects on na-
tional and international levels.

A call for such projects would spark creative proposals from hundreds of NGO’s
across the EU with different ideas for and approaches to engaging senior citizens in so-
ciopolitical life—everything from art to ecology to social activities to intellectual pur-
suits—thus granting the elderly opportunities to participate correspondent to their in-
terests and knowledge base. Analysis of these projects’ results could be used to identify
which methods are both effective and suitable to long-term implementation via policy or
programming on the national or European level.


CAPITALISM
Healing divides, furthering democracy

Falko Reichardt & Lucile Gemähling
(European Projects Coordinators, Citizens for Europe)
Given the title “Overcoming European divides”, our authors have addressed many of the issues at the core of European public discussion and policy debate in the two years since our last publication. Yet somehow, the sense of urgency conveyed by the title has faded—is it because the complexity of the issues at hand has narrowed the focus? Or has pessimistic pragmatism fully taken over, eroding hope? What can citizens and civil society actors add to this discussion?

One European divide growing more urgent every day is that between the proclaimed European values of human rights, democracy and justice on the one hand and reality on the other. This divide has taken different forms.

Since 2015 we have seen the reluctance of many European governments to commit to fundamental and human rights: rather than organising safe passage and search and rescue missions, the EU has signed deals with authoritarian regimes to keep people on opposite shores of the Mediterranean. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary have refused to resettle war refugees in defiance of a ruling by the European Court of Justice. Human rights organisations must keep fighting ever-tightening asylum laws and practices in most European countries. Democracy is threatened in several member states of the EU and on the verge of collapse in others. Far-right populist parties have gained influence and political power in Austria, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and now Germany. France has spent two full years under a “state of emergency” that openly allowed for human rights violations. The democratic constitutional state is actively being eroded in Poland and Hungary.

Last but not least, even the relative social and economic comfort that had brought about stability sufficient to establish the European project and bolster the democracies within it is showing visible cracks. In the last few years, inequalities have exploded. Climate change has begun affecting every continent across the globe, Europe included.

Whether we pin the focus on security, poverty, migration and asylum or climate change, it seems ever more necessary to increase transnational cooperation at the European level and ground it solidly in the principles of human rights, justice and democracy. But our European social and political structures seem unable or their actors reluctant to give way to democratic and economic models compatible with social, economic and climate justice.

What kind of Europe could rise to such challenges? First of all, we would argue, a Europe where policy-making is more democratic and less fragmented, where nationalistic tendencies are better contained. As Uppsala University’s contribution underlines, it is important to understand eurosceptic discourses better. Resisting populist simplifications also demands that constructive and complex criticism of European institutions and the realities they produce be formulated, circulated and discussed. The connection Bocconi identifies between unemployment and a lack of trust in the EU is an interesting one. Yet even when only people in economically unstable situations express lower confidence in or criticise a system—given that the data says, in other words, that only a majority of students and managers exhibit trust in the EU—this does not mean that their political critiques or mistrust are unfounded. Why shouldn’t the worst off among us question the validity of the existing political and economic system and inspire us to do better to provide for all?
There are, indeed, clear and tangible aspects of the democratic divide in Europe. As the European Parliament has no direct legislative power, European policy-making within the European Commission and Council contributes to a certain fragmentation, which sometimes results in phenomena such as the one described in LMU’s article on European poverty eradication efforts. Worse yet, national interests and the soft power of specific member states play important roles, sometimes at the expense of European citizens’ interests and wishes. Different actors—such as the Commission’s President Jean-Claude Juncker or heads of certain member states, most recently France’s President Emmanuel Macron—may well present overarching political visions for Europe beyond specific issues, but the democratic legitimacy of their vision at the European level is highly questionable. We therefore support voices from inside European civil society calling for deep democratic reforms of the European institutions—as opposed to short-term, nonbinding initiatives outside of them. Engaging in such explorations of other ways Europe could function may open more compelling political alternatives and reduce the political space for anti-democratic parties.

Furthermore, specific divides within European societies lead some people to face inequality of opportunity, political representation and participation and to receive unequal treatment within the education, healthcare, and even justice systems. That discrimination means poverty and unemployment, two of the issues addressed in this publication, affect certain groups more heavily and enduringly than others. Poverty rates are higher amongst women. Long-term unemployment is more likely to affect people of colour and people with disabilities. Healthcare for LGBTQIA* people is more often inadequate. Many of these statements apply interchangeably to members of these groups, and while some of these divides have widened under pressure from the 2007/8 economic crisis, others have been reinforced by political discourses around security and migration.

We believe democracies cannot afford to ignore and thus reproduce discrimination based on gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, ability or national origin. It is important to observe that the groups mentioned above are generally underrepresented inside political and governing institutions. Progress on that front is slow and sometimes even reversing: the newly elected German parliament has fewer women MPs (31%) than it did 15 years ago. We believe discrimination is incompatible with stable democratic societies and often builds the base upon which they are threatened. Constructing a new democracy at a transnational level would present us with an opportunity to radically improve in these areas. We therefore wish to encourage all actors involved in the ambitious project of bridging European divides—or better yet, healing them—to pay greater attention to the way our European democratic models, even in places where they remain stable, are biased in terms of opportunities, participation and representation.

Finally, in several corners of Europe today civil society actors are denied space and resources, and their legitimacy as partners in policy dialogue is questioned. With them in mind, we are grateful for spaces like the Allianz Summer Academy and this publication, which are essential in fostering dialogue and critical exchange, however challenging these may be for all actors involved.
ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The opinions expressed within these pages are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

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For questions regarding this publication please contact:

Allianz Kulturstiftung
  Pariser Platz 6
  10117 Berlin, Germany
  kulturstiftung@allianz.de
  www.allianz-kulturstiftung.de

Editorial Team Allianz Kulturstiftung
  Lucia Christiane Obst, Michael M. Thoss

Editorial Team Citizens For Europe
  Lucile Gemähling, Hilary Bown, Martin Wilhelm
  www.citizensforeurope.org

Graphic Design
  Eva Gonçalves
  www.evagoncalves.com

Illustrations
  Dan Perjovschi

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