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The EU in the 21st Century

Challenges and Opportunities for the European Integration Process

Springer

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Hegoak ebaki banizkio
nerea izango zen,
ez zuen aldegingo.
Bainan, honela
ez zen gehiago txoria izango
Eta nik…
txoria nuen maite.

To Ossu, Anne Maria, Hugolin and Stella Marella

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The Current Position of the Union in Terms of Integration and Development

EU in Twenty-First Century, Does Crisis Mean Opportunity?

David Ramiro Troitiño, Tanel Kerikmäe, Ricardo Martín de la Guardia and Guillermo Á. Pérez Sánchez

Abstract This book analyzes the long-term problems of the European Union from a multidisciplinary approach. The European Union is facing numerous challenges in the twenty-first century. Some of them can be an opportunity to advance in the integration process; others can be even a threat to the existence of the organization. Nevertheless, all of them are a fascinating combination basic to understand the current state of the European integration process, how the European Union was created, what it is now, and what could be its future shape when these problems are addressed in the coming future.

Keywords European integration · European Union · Future of the EU

The structure of each chapter must follow a neo-functionalism approach: Basically, how the situation was before, how the previous situation was improved, how the situation is now, and what to do to improve the current situation (spillover effect).

1 Introduction

The European Union is a long-term peace project started in order to avoid confrontations between its members. The first successful attempt, the European Coal and Steel Community, set the path of the integration, for the further development of the organization. The Schuman Declaration publicly reflects that Europe cannot be built at once but gradually. The further the member states are integrated, the less the possibilities for a confrontation between them. Since then, the integration has been based on two different slopes:

– Regular improvements in the working system of the European Union based on the daily expertise and necessities.

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– Treaties and other important measures including important novelties in the area of influence of the European Union.

This book focuses on the second option, more spectacular, from the perspective of integration as a necessity of the own process. There are other possibilities, as an ambitious political leadership, but mostly the great steps further in the integration process are the consequence of fulfilling communitarian necessities.

Currently, the European Union has gone beyond the national barriers without achieving a state status. It is a consequence of the actors involved in the process, as the governments of the member states. Systematically, they want to solve the problems generated inside the organization, but with the less sharing of national sovereignty as possible. It has generated tensions inside the process of integration because deeper integration is seen as the solution for most of the problems of the European Union. Nevertheless, the necessity of compromise between the different actors involved in the creation and development of the European Union means the influence of three main paths of integration: neo-functionalism, cooperation, and federalism.

The structure of each chapter has followed a neo-functionalism approach: Basically, how the situation was before, how the previous situation was improved, how the situation is now, and what to do to improve the current situation (spillover effect), but without forgetting other influences as already mentioned. The whole understanding of the process and solutions comes from the inclusion of different perspectives and proposals to reach the compromise between all the participants in the process of integration.

This work is for students and researchers, as we believe the different chapters have been developed in a way that a general reader can understand it and a researcher can use it. It has implied several restrictions in order to combine the general interest of the publication and its scientific value. It is divided into several chapters that can be read independently providing an accurate inside sight on the topic. Nevertheless, the general analysis of the whole work will provide the reader with a wide perspective of the current situation of the European Union in terms of challenges and possible outcomes.

The topics have been selected thinking about the main challenges for the European Union in the coming future, understanding challenges as opportunities. Crisis is period of change; these movements from the European perspective can have three different outcomes, included in all the chapters selected:

– Deeper integration: The European Union solves its problems increasing the common management of a problem in order to solve the previous distortions, wrong functioning or just new necessities that did not exist before.
– Stagnation: The different interest of the different actors involved in the European Union cannot reach a common position and nothing is done. Normally, it happens when the solution to the problem or answer to the challenge needs a sacrifice that some actors are not willing to make. In other words, the solution is known, but the priorities are others. Once the problem becomes a priority, an agreement is reached.

– Less integration: This is the less common approach in the European Union integration process, but it is important to keep it in mind as the Euroscepticism grows during the crisis periods. Currently, the Brexit is a good example of this option, but also the call from different political parties and even member states to renationalize some European policies.

2 Content of the Publication

All the chapters are selected according to their influence in the development of the European Union in the twenty-first century. Their importance comes from different sources, as economy, politics, public opinion, or just potential benefits for the European Union. Obviously, there are not included all the challenges but those the editors considered crucial in the coming years.

The starting point of this ambitious work is a detailed description of the current position of the European Union in terms of integration and development, analyzing from general approach the complete thematic of the book developed by Guillermo Pérez, an outstanding scholar with the needed long-term vision to develop such a delicate thematic. This chapter also includes an overview of other important challenges for the European Union not included in this publication for practical reasons.[1]

The concerns of the European citizens are a basic necessity for the development and success of the European Union because without the support of the people the organization will just collapse in the coming years. The European Union must answer the necessities of its people if it wants to gain their loyalty. Any transfer of loyalty can be made by the states, but will not last without the support of the citizens, real holders of the sovereignty in our European societies.

Hence, Ricardo Martín de la Guardia discusses populism, new political parties in Europe, governments and ideas and their support for a less integrated Europe.[2] Religion and identity are a part of these concerns of the citizens, as the previous homogeneity of Europe based on Christianity or secularism is not a reality. New obstacles and challenges have risen for the development of the Union in the context of internal cohesion, masterly described by Luis Domínguez Castro and José Ramón Rodríguez Lago. They have been able to provide a clear vision of an issue really controversial in Europe and crucial for its social and educational development.[3]

The preoccupation that migration generates among Europeans is higher than ever, and it affects the development of the European Union and its survival. Lara Sansus has presented this problematic challenge discussing the role of the EU in the migration crisis and in relation to the member states. Her research analyzes how migration will affect the internal and external affairs of the European Union and why it is a

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[1]Martin and Perez (1995).

[2]De la guardia and Sánchez (2003).

[3]Castro and Lago (2018).

key question regarding integration or multiculturalism as options for the future.[4] Migration is becoming a main concern for the European population and it will affect the EU. Therefore, it is crucial to foresee what the EU can do to provide the right answers to its citizens.

Terrorism and criminality are becoming a concern for the European Union citizens. The free movement of people included in the treaties has brought some negative side effects as the free movement of criminals. Nataliia Oliievska focuses on this problem and proposes different alternatives in order to solve the necessities of the citizens in this field from the less restrictive approach to the integration perspective.[5]

There are challenges linked with the internal development of the European Union, and the integration has generated some benefits, but also some new obstacles that need to be solved in order to improve the global performance of the European Union. Brexit, as a failure in the integration process, is a fundamental issue in the coming years as it can threaten the own existence of the organization if the British succeed in the process. The success of the British secession will not be decided by the performance of UK outside of the European Union, but the combined perspective of, on the one hand, the British performance and, on the other hand, the EU performance.[6] If UK grows more than the EU, Brexit would be an option for other member states; if the EU grows more than UK, Brexit will be a failure. Hence, it is a fundamental work led by Essi Laitinen to understand the possibilities lying ahead of the Brexit and how they will affect the UK and the EU.

The Brexit understood as a part of a bigger process outlines the structural contradictions of the communitarian framework and the inevitabilities to reform the structure of the European Union to avoid future problems. The topic is masterfully dissected By Celso Cancela outlining the problems created by the own architectural development of the European Union and how the EU should face them.[7] As the EU is a moving project in a constant evolution, its structural framework needs to adapt to these changes.

The use of new technologies will be vital in the reform project as the EU needs new tools for increasing effectiveness and closeness with its citizens. It is necessary to improve how the citizens interact with the structures of the state. Tanel Kerikmäe, as main researcher, focuses on the participation in the EU democratic process and EU elections[8]; the way they can help with the democratic deficit of the European Union; and how the EU can shape the world with its normative power in this field.

This influence can be seen in the exceptional research presented by Carlos Aldereguia; the EU has a great opportunity to create high standards of environmental protection in the world, saving the planet from its current degradation. The specific topic chosen is related to fishing, given that the EU is the main world market for fishery and aquaculture products. Facing the magnitude and urgency of the

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[4]Kerikmäe (2014).

[5]Ramiro and Pando (2017).

[6]Troitino et al. (2018).

[7]Outeda (2001).

[8]Kerikmäe et al. (2019).

problem of IUU fishing, the EU decided to intensify its action and adopt additional measures derived from the current international framework.

The normative power of the European Union has been long discussed, but it is basic enforcing the communitarian law inside the European Union with high effectiveness. There is still space enforcing law in the European Union. Ondrej Hamulak's research covers the rule of law principle as two-way (general) provision addressed to the EU itself[9] and the member states, and it will cover all thinkable alternatives of the promotion to this constitutional cornerstone of the EU.

Iwona Pawlas addresses a problematic topic, the economy inside of the European Union. It has been a very successful field, and the integration is going beyond the economy. Nevertheless, as a dynamic system, it cannot be forgotten. There are many challenges ahead that need to be outlined, and proposals are needed for perfecting the system and decreasing the negative aspects of the economic union of Europe.[10]

The European Union needs to reform internally for facing twenty-first-century challenges successfully, but there are also external incentives. David Ramiro Trotino leads a research group on the external projection of the European Union from a wide perspective, presenting a coherent map of an intricate system. If the EU wants to have some responsibility and influence on the external world, the whole system should be reformed.[11] The current globalization reduces the independent capacity of the individual states, so the union of the European States is a necessity to keep their international influence. European understanding of the society alive.

The eastern border of the European Union presents the higher challenge from the external point of view; the crisis generated in Ukraine has already tested the performance of the European Union in the international arena. The European Union has not cleared its position, to stand firmly on these principles or being pragmatic. Iurii H. Barabash and two more colleagues from Ukraine present this idea by representing the controversy in Ukraine between European human rights and path dependency with Russia.[12] The European Union has an excellent opportunity reassuring its ideals in the world, but its position is still not clear, as there are different positions between the communitarian actors involved in the process.

The conflict in Ukraine challenges the external relations of the European Union with Russia, main priority for many members of the European Union. The benefits and losses of this cooperation are highly important for the European Union because it will shape its own essence in opposition or collaboration with its biggest neighbor, Russia. Alexander Antonov discusses it brilliantly in the context of the NATO Russia Council.[13]

Russia is also a main character in the last topic selected for this work, the challenge presented by cybersecurity. Agnes Kasper and Holger Mölder provide the perfect

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[9]Hamuľák (2016).

[10]Pawlas (2014).

[11]Troitiño et al. (2017).

[12]Барабаш (2004).

[13]Antonov (2018).

example of new necessities of the European Union.[14] The Common Foreign and Security Policy was not thought for cyber defense because in its origins it was not a priority, but now the organization must react fast to face a challenge that could threaten the working system of the European Union and its member states.[15]

3   Conclusions

The European Union is facing multiple challenges in twenty-first century; some will be solved with deeper integration, creating new structures and policies and sharing a new level of sovereignty between the member states. Some will be temporally addressed with higher level of cooperation, delaying the negative consequences or even unravelling their complex implications. However, some of these challenges will require efforts the member states are not willing to do and will remain unsolved.

Nevertheless, the European Union will move forward as a living process that cannot be stagnant for a long period or its own existence is in danger. There will be changes related to society, politics, law, economy, and international relations. The capacity of the European Union to address successfully described in this publication will determine the future of the organization in the close future and its success internally, in terms of social, political, and economic development, but also externally where the competition between world powers could decrease the effectiveness of the European Union.

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The European Union Crossroads: Current Situation and Future Challenges

Guillermo Á. Pérez Sánchez

> *Le bilan reste positif.*
> Robert Schuman, *Pour l' Europe.*

Abstract This is a description of the current position of the European Union in terms of integration and development wherein the subject matter is analysed using a general approach.

1 Initial Note (as an Introduction)[1]

From a historical perspective, it can confidently be affirmed that the European integration process was fundamental to the peace-building work this "savage continent"[2] needed to eradicate the ill will the end of the war had foreshadowed. As is pointed out below, the alternative to this "savage continent" was proffered by Robert Schuman, despite the fact that it may initially have seemed as if the process to be attempted were

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[1]This section serves as an introduction to the rest of the chapters.

[2]Lowe (2016) and Zweig (2017).

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a kind of "leap in the dark"[3] or "an uncertain road"[4] (according to Ian Kershaw[5])
that must be taken in order to restore Europe. Thus lays the land almost seventy years
after the European project that started with the Schuman Declaration[6] on 9 May 1950
and the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) the following
year (Treaty of Paris, 18 April 1951).

With the 60th anniversary of the 25 March 1957 Treaty of Rome now past, two
questions arise: does the European community stand before a crossroads now, a
particularly decisive moment since its founding? Or, on the contrary: without denying
the crossroads in front of the European community project begun in the 1950s, could
it be said in the latter half of the second decade of the twenty-first century that
Schuman's proverbial balance sheet still positive? To answer either question, we must
first analyse the European project from a historical perspective to see whether it could
be concluded, paraphrasing a certain Enlightenment thinker, that "If the European
Union didn't exist, it would be necessary to invent it". Since it has already been
"invented", we must subsequently assess its present situation and future challenges.
In the words of Araceli Mangas Martín: "Nevertheless, it is thanks to the existence of
the European Union—with all of its faults—and of other international organisations
that this brutal economic crisis [2007–2014] did not lead us to war, which is the
way in which similar situations were resolved in the past". In this regard, Mangas
herself indicated the following in a later article: "The European Union, despite its
problems and circumstantial flaws, is the only conceivable context for the continent's
communal well-being. The only thing we Europeans have to fear today is the advance
of 'revived local tribalism'. Just like in 1914 and 1939".[7]

As things stand, and with all data in hand, this is a reflection on whether the
European Union stands before a crossroad leading to nowhere, or rather whether, with
its many vices and virtues, this unifying project—to borrow a valuable descriptor
from Ortega y Gasset, pioneer[8] and champion of the European ideal (as he defined
himself after giving his speech, *Europa Meditatio Quadem* [Meditation on Europe],
on 7 September 1949 at the newly created Free University of Berlin)—continues to
be worthwhile. We explore whether the scales tip towards the positive in the same
way they did when presented by Schuman fifty-six years ago in his missive "*Pour
l'Europe*" (in English, "For Europe"), a volume published posthumously.

Taking this into account, a review of the present situation leads one to the con-
clusion that perhaps the European Union stands not just at one crossroads, but at
many. It faces the task of choosing a road from amongst at least four possibilities.
No matter which path it chooses, the European Union will have to respond to a series

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[3]Martín de la Torre (2015).

[4]Translator's Note (T.N.). A reference to the title of the Spanish translation of Kershaw's book,
"*Ascenso y crisis. Europa, 1950–2017. Un camino incierto*", originally entitled "Roller-Coaster:
Europe, 1950–2017".

[5]Kershaw (2019).

[6]Becerril Atienza (2018, 41–50).

[7]Spanish periodical *El Norte de Castilla*, 18-V-2013, pp. 22–23; *El Mundo*, 6-I-2014, p. 17.

[8]Ortega y Gasset (1986).

of compromising and even critical situations that loom on the horizon: the immense challenges to be resolved now and in the near future.

2   The European Union Facing the Twenty-First Century

At the end of his life, Robert Shuman wrote in his "European will", "*Le bilan reste positif*": "The balance sheet remains positive".[9,10] His words faithfully match our reality: finally, the new possible Europe was underway. According to Luis Suárez, "Sixty years [referring to the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome]. A very small number, given the dimensions of the goal that we strive for. Yet, it is evident that we have made considerable achievements. War in Europe has been put to an end. A good deal more: armies are restoring their moral order now that they consider themselves to be humanitarian instruments called upon as a sorrowful remedy to defend victims of hate".[11] This is a new Europe in which, thanks to peace amongst Europeans, its nations have reached their greatest levels of development and socio-economic well-being at the hand of good democratic governance. Herein lies its essence, in the form of three great ideas that are the bedrock of the European ideal.[12] For George Steiner, the essence of Europe is represented by its *cafés* and human-scaled cities.[13] This is the differentiating factor which gives the Old World its distinct personality within the global world. This is a new Europe, in conclusion, one able to prevent the final catastrophe so many times approached: "We leave the twentieth century behind, which many historians have called the cruellest in history with an abundance of arguments. (…) Beyond the negative experiences, we are compelled to remember its creative efforts. These three founding fathers of the new Europe born out of the post-war period, themselves emanating from a politically active Catholicism, proposed that moral values should be carried over into political terrain, thereby erasing the hate that had separated countries".[14] The three fathers Luis Suárez refers to are Schuman, Adenauer and De Gasperi, cited by name by Suárez as he reflected on the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome:

> An important point: what the Treaty of Rome abolished was nothing less than a prolonged and dour track comprising more than six hundred years of periods highlighted by increasingly cruel wars that were capable of extending their plague-like reaches across the entire globe. That said, while the voices demanding peace resounded from many and diverse planes, it is impossible to forget that they united only when Adenauer, Schuman and De Gasperi took the matter into their own hands and delved to its deepest roots.[15]

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[9]Schuman (2006, 98).

[10]T.N.: Own translation from Spanish.

[11]Spanish periodical *La Razón*, 9-IV-2017, p. 5.

[12]Pérez Sánchez (2001, 15–55).

[13]Steiner (2012, 64).

[14]Suárez Fernández (2003, 338).

[15]*La Razón*, 9-IV-2017, p. 5.

As subsequently developed, and with Robert Schuman's political generation no longer present, this new Europe followed in the footsteps of the Declaration of 9 May 1950: "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity". Thus, it was gradually perfected, strengthened and expanded with time. And so, the new Europe had to be everyone's; it would only reach fulfilment with the membership of all European nations, joined amongst themselves by the same values. In this regard, and despite a lengthy wait, its expansion process finally reached the eastern end of the Old World. In effect, fifty years after the start of the integration process that forged the European Communities and coinciding with the collapse of the Soviet socialist system in former Eastern Europe,[16] the pro-Europe example was set by the 1950s generation, specifically their commitment to peace, freedom, democracy, social justice and human rights, as they arduously and resolvedly impelled that the continent's central and south-eastern countries come "back to Europe" and to the "common European house"[17] through their integration in the European Union. As Michael Zantovsky relates it:

> Within weeks of the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, the slogan 'Back to Europe' emerged, spontaneously and independently, in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. Already in January 1990, Havel spoke of the joint 'return to Europe' to the Polish Sejm and Senate. In May 1991, in Aachen, on the occasion of receiving the Charlemagne award for his contribution to the European idea, Havel spoke of the ambition to win full membership in the EU. It took another thirteen years for the Czech Republic and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe to get there.[18]

The above segment is, in fact, part of the chapter notably titled "Back to Europe" from Michael Zantovsky's book on Václav Havel, entitled "Havel. A Life" (Great Britain, Atlantic, 2014). It was clear that without the old Eastern European countries, the EU integration process underway would be incomplete.[19]

But the task is not finished. To paraphrase Kant, "We must continue cultivating our garden". In other words, the never-ending task is to preserve and align the European legacy to the times without which the new, united Europe would get off track. To avoid straying adrift, there could be nothing better, thought Robert Schuman, than to educate the new generations of Europeans in the classroom.[20] "We never tire of repeating it: the unity of Europe will not be achieved by European institutions; it will only be possible to the degree that mindsets evolve. Herein lies the importance of the free movement of ideas and people among European countries; countries that oppose this on principle will exclude themselves from Europe".[21] Deepening his analysis ("Europe is a Cultural and Spiritual Community", analysis presented by Robert Schuman at the "The European spiritual and cultural problem, considered

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[16]Pérez Sánchez (2007, 191–217).

[17]Martín de la Guardia and Pérez Sánchez (2017).

[18]Zantovsky (2017, 134) and Zantovsky (2016).

[19]Martín de la Guardia and Pérez Sánchez (2009, 153–221).

[20]Troitiño (2017).

[21]T.N.: Own translation from Spanish.

as a historical entity, and the means by which to express this unity in contemporary terms", round table discussion held by the European Council in Rome during October 1953), he wrote, amongst other things, the following:

> In the first place, it is necessary—imperative—for Europeans to become conscious of what unites them (…) "Europe divided has not known how to provide the modern world with the "spiritual message" that it needed. (…) Europe will re-forge its spirit from the diversity of its traits and ambitions. The unity of these fundamental concepts is reconciled through the plurality of its traditions and convictions, and with the responsibility of private initiative. Contemporary Europe must be constituted by this co-existence, which will not be a simple conglomerate of rival nations who are periodically hostile, but instead an organised and collaborative community of action.[22]

With the impetus of the European ideal—a way of understanding and making Europe—the new possible Europe inherited now and passed from one century to the next will thereby be able to continue along its path in the framework of an evolving European Union in an attempt to "overcome what we have inherited, integrating it in a revitalised way".[23]

2.1 The European Union at Its Crossroads

To reflect on the present circumstances of the European Union also means to think about everything that has been achieved, taking into consideration the circumstances of its founding, as has been mentioned, in a Europe destroyed and divided by two wars—both of them Armageddon-like—during the first half of the twentieth century (the 100th anniversary of the start of the first, as well as the 80th anniversary of the start of the second now behind us). Be as it may, Europe's present—and here we may indeed speak of Europe, the Europe united in the early days of the twenty-first century—or that of the European Union, can be said to be at a crossroads. The outlook should appear much more optimistic to Europeans now than the past of precisely one hundred years ago.[24] In any case, a look at the present situation leads us to affirm— as has been mentioned before—that the European Union possibly faces multiple crossroads[25] and must choose a path from among—at least—four possibilities.

These issues will be contemplated through the study carried out by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation (associated with German social democracy) regarding the four possible process scenarios that could arise at the heart of the European Union at this time and until the year 2020. Between their extremes, Europe would find itself in an indefinite dead-end crisis or, conversely, on a path towards a sort of federal union aimed at creating the "United States of Europe". The study's key findings were presented to the Spanish public through an interview with its coordinator, Bjoern Hacker.

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[22]T.N.: Own translation from Spanish.

[23]Beneyto (1999, 127).

[24]Coudenhove-Kalergi (2002).

[25]López-Aranda (2017, 68–82).

Another analysis entitled New Pact for Europe will be used to address the premises of the above study. Reflecting on "a European future in five scenarios", this study was presented in a Spanish forum organised by the *Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior* [Foundation for International Relations and Foreign Dialogue] (FRIDE).[26] In any event, in 2019 (and therefore, more than sixty years after the Treaty of Rome[27] and nearly seventy after the Schuman Declaration, as has been mentioned), the aim is to continue advancing, always keeping Goethe's words in mind: "You and yours may remain idle, but he whoever follows me will always have tasks at hand". Let us, therefore, place the possible courses upon the table for analysis as delineated by the crossroads that the European currently faces.

The first of these paths, and the initial crossroad on the horizon with regards to the economic crisis that reared its head starting from 2007 to 2008, would establish a dead-end scenario for the European Union which neither EU institution leaders nor the government leaders of the Member States most affected would be able to effectively stave off. They would be reduced to "muddling through" it, which would have a negative effect on the proper function of the EU monetary and economic processes currently in place. In addition, Member State economies would cease to be as competitive as other more vigorous economies of the moment, such as China's, due to "stagnation, deflation and debt", in a situation that would be sustained over time. For the team of analysts coordinated by Bjoern Hacker, this description would define "the phase" in which we found ourselves at the peak of the last crisis and to which we could again return if we relapse into another similar situation. This would undoubtedly spark general unrest in European public opinion to the point of even raising questions about the Eurozone and therefore the aforementioned monetary and economic union process. On this point, Ana Palacio, ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs for Spain, emphasised that "The internal European market continues to work, but it has lost its magic", during a forum organised by the aforementioned FRIDE in order to present the New Pact for Europe. "The legitimacy it had then among citizens in terms of guaranteeing prosperity today no longer exists". However, she rejected the idea that introducing the euro had been a crass error, explaining that the common currency "was conceived in the 1980s at a historic moment when no one could have imagined today's world. The euro has its flaws, but it is a fundamental pillar of the European Union, which is humanity's greatest project following World War II". In the same debate, ex-president of the European Parliament Enrique Barón "rejected the idea of either renouncing the euro or rethinking the entire debate on Europe".

The second path outlined by the aforementioned Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation—based on the first, but much more traumatic—would lead to a hypothetical "Yugoslavia-like" rupture of the Union,[28] which could entail a scenario that would not be devoid of violence, or even, albeit less dramatic, a "Soviet-like" rupture.[29] Truly, Dantesque to pro-European idealists, this scenario would come about as the

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[26]Spanish periodical *XLSemanal* (14 April 2013). Spanish periodical *El País* (21 February 2014).

[27]López-Aranda (2017, 68–82) and Khader (2017, 94–103).

[28]Martín de la Guardia and Pérez Sánchez (2007).

[29]Martín de la Guardia and Pérez Sánchez (2005).

result of divisions and hostilities fuelled by populist radicalism from the extreme right and extreme left, as well as sickly nationalism, both forged in the heat of European politics. Contrary to the values of the European ideal mentioned above, this would certainly dilapidate the inheritance of nearly seventy years of European integration from which Europeans from the four corners of the Old Continent currently benefit. (The association between the UK and the European Union may expire, part of the quintessential nature of divisive national-populism, after forty-six years, which, for some analysts, may signal the beginning of the collapse for European integration.[30]) Thus, the old spectres of ancient hatreds, confrontations, conflicts and even war amongst Europeans could again be revived.

> The success of Brexit corresponds to the rise of the nationalist populism that has spread across Europe for the last decade. At the end of the twentieth century, it was a rarity in the form of small factions the political analysts and historians identified with radicalism or as simply bizarre. Today they have turned into mainstream movements that leave their mark on political agendas and language. Not only has there been UKIP in the United Kingdom,[31] the French National Rally and Spain's Unidos Podemos, but other parties of the same fabric with the same ability to govern have arisen in Austria and the Netherlands under the names of the Freedom Party and the Party for Freedom, as well as the *Fidesz*—Hungarian Civic Union in Hungary (and especially, *Jobbik* [For A Better Hungary]), Alternative for Germany, the Swedish Democrats, the True Finns, with populism in Greece between *Syriza* and the Independent Greeks—National Patriotic Alliance (ANEL), having also seen the victory of the Five Star Movement in Italy, as well as the populist party in Denmark, to top off the list.

> Populism is a virus that resides "ab initio" (from the beginning) in the organism called political society. Once it has appeared, the most normal turn of events is that the contagion of its words, ways, agenda and aims spreads to other political stakeholders. It does not simply arise due to political corruption, economic crisis or refugees. This is the left's explanation. There are other factors that explain its ascent. First, adequate ideological foundational support must exist, a mentality if you will, in order for populism to be successful. Evident, for example, in the hearts and smiles of the Podemos campaign, the growing sentimentalism in politics, gestated in the hyper-protective society of the welfare state and nourished by the transformation of politicians into media-broadcast spectacles, has generated what could be called "emotional democracy." This has made effective political discourse turn to a focus on moving emotions, especially hate, anaesthetising the intellect and reason, and appealing to simple moral-laden proposals that are comfortable for citizens. The more emotional and infantilised politics is, the easier it becomes for the populist to navigate the terrain: "The phantom haunts Europe again".[32]

To prevent this from affecting the European community process underway, José María Beneyto, participant in the aforementioned FRIDE forum organised in order to reflect on a New Pact for Europe, advocated for teaching values (cited above) that give meaning to the European Union. Whilst it is true that "what has been done up to now has been essential", it is absolutely necessary to keep up the "fight to continue spreading the word", to which all pro-Europeans should be committed.

The third of these foreseeable paths—likewise formulated according to the first alternative laid out above—may be similarly contrary to the pro-European pursuits

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[30]Leonard (2017a, 10–11).

[31]Ramiro Troitino and Pando Ballesteros (2017).

[32]Jorge Vilches: *La Razón*, 26-VI-2016, p. 34.

formulated by the fathers of the European Community after the end of the Second World War: the transformation of the European Union into a kind of "German private club". "Germany and the most stable economies" would belong to this "exclusive club" (the antithesis of the Europeanism spearheaded by Robert Schuman and the political generation of the 1950s) as its own fiscal and economic union. Thus, in this third scenario, a "smaller and more stable" European Union would drive a fiscal, monetary and economic union, where less stable or "periphery" economies would remain outside, unable to participate. However, the first question to answer would be to establish which economies would be considered the "periphery". Are we talking about the southern European countries that have suffered the ravages of the economic crisis more intensely? Or should "sick" economies such as France's and Italy's economies also comprise the "periphery"? The creation of this third scenario would mean nothing less than the oft-evoked "two-speed Europe". This scenario currently appears to be the most plausible one for overcoming the European community's current situation, according to the leaders of the most significant member states: Germany, France[33] and Spain[34] (no longer Italy, now lingering at the far edges of the system in holding with its militant anti-Europe, nationalist-populist government). Europe has remained burdened with persistent effects of the economic crisis since 2007–2008, which, according to certain analyses, has degenerated into a European identity crisis. In any event, and as indicated by Jordi Sevilla, Spanish ex-Minister of Territorial Policy and Public Function, in the aforementioned FRIDE forum,[35] the European Union's current situation should be monitored with more calm and "lower expectations about what this could effectively offer us, as well as try to implement the provisions established in treaties" without interestedly forcing the any of the variables of the integration process underway with respect to some Member States.

The fourth and last scenario amongst the possible alternatives (to bring to a close a process that would present new derived situations unendingly) would set a course towards a kind of federal union, that is, a "United States of Europe". This option is already well known, having been discussed in the mid-nineteenth century by persons with European convictions such as Victor Hugo. According to statements in the cited study conducted by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation, this scenario is considered "the most difficult, yet most desirable scenario" by experts. They are not wrong about its difficulty, considering the even-more-utopian-than-possible nature of the goal of creating a "United States of Europe" in the short to mid-term. The prospect does not appear to be on the agenda for European nations, especially those most implicated in the integration process, such as France. The stated goal—more utopian than possible, we repeat—enjoys sympathies from a certain sector of pro-European idealists, as demonstrated in the aforementioned FRIDE forum; when asked a question in this regard by María J. Rodríguez, Portugal's ex-Minister of Work, the majority of the audience "supported the most complex and ambitious option: creating a United States of Europe".

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[33]Demesmay (2017, 38–44) and Gutiérrez-Peris (2019, 76–85).

[34]Leonard (2017b, 16–22).

[35]Kerikmäe (2019).

Having outlined the possible crossroads that lay before the European Union in our day and time, the first option should be discarded as undesirable, since it would lead to the dead end of permanent economic crisis. We would likewise reject the second option discussed amongst the scenarios as destructive because it would incite a "Yugoslavian"- or "Soviet"-like end (notwithstanding, Brexit has placed the assertion that the integration process underway would be "irreversible" into question, albeit the contagious effect predicted by some analysts has not come to pass[36]). We would moreover discard the third of the courses open to us due to its characteristic lack of solidarity and thereby reject the EU's conversion into an "exclusive club" only for "privileged countries" (although, as has been noted, the "two-speed Europe" presents itself as a realistic option nowadays). Thus, only the fourth possible crossroad remains open to us, but with the caveat that, beyond a route to federalism, from our point of view, the most desirable option would be to slowly and steadily strengthen the monetary and economic union currently in place.

2.2 The European Union and (Some of) Its Future Challenges

Reflecting on the future of the European Union means thinking about the challenges ahead[37] as the first two decades of the twenty-first century come to a close. As stated before, the European Union must respond to at least (not to restrict the list) five compromising, perhaps even critical, situations that loom on the horizon: the immense challenges to be resolved now and in the near future. First, the euro-scepticism that never fails to make a dent in the European ideal must be met head-on[38] with renewed faith in European integration. In this regard, it is worth recalling what an article entitled "*De los euroconvencidos a los antieuropeos*" ["From Euro-Convinced to Anti-Europe"] expressed, quoted here:

> Until now, euro-scepticism had developed at the margins of the system, both at the ideological extremes and among parties that did not occupy government positions (Araceli Mangas refers to an article entitled, "*La resistible ascensión de la anti Europa*" ["The Resistible Ascent of Anti-Europe"[39]]). Hence, it is not surprising that the clans considered to be euro-sceptics have been the populist radical right, the radical left, agrarian parties and protestant parties. Meanwhile, the main clans—socialists, liberals, Christian democrats—have converged in pro-integration positions (…). So, while it can be confirmed that the new wave of euro-scepticism has permeated all Member States with an electoral decline in euro-believers, euro-scepticism has diverse faces. While anti-European parties are the ones winning electoral gains in the north (the populist radical right), in the south, the alter-Europeans (the radical

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[36]Troitiño et al. (2018).

[37]Fernández Navarrete (2018, 324–370).

[38]Soto Carmona (2019).

[39]Spanish periodical *El Mundo*, 06-05-2014.

right) are particularly successful. Considering the current power balance within European institutions, what future awaits the European Union?[40]

The immediate future was recently outlined upon the close of the 26 May 2019 elections to the European Parliament. The most significant aspect of the results was not the loss of weight carried by the two traditional powerhouses, the popular parties and socialists, but instead the consolidation of groups contrary to the European community process, from euro-sceptics to openly anti-Europeans, from both the right and left ends of the political spectrum. (British European parliamentarians were amongst them, the UK being obliged by legal imperative to participate in voting whilst Brexit has still not been made official.) Whilst the number of these groups' seats did increase, their totals were insufficient to create a minority block that could paralyse parliamentary action.

Secondly, the economic situation must be addressed resolutely—without overlooking the consolidation of the euro on the international market alongside the dollar—in order to restore European Union citizens' trust in the maintenance of socio-economic welfare right now, which is still in question due to the hardships of the economic crisis that started in 2007–2008. This is the thrust of some analyses, for example, the one put forward by Salvador Forner and Heidy-Cristina Senante: "Until rather recently, a complaisant tale (to a greater or lesser degree) concerning monetary unification was the norm, within which a variety of narratives relating to European integration converged, including institutional, political and academic ones. These narratives had been based on the acceptance of a supposed internal logic concerning the evolution of economic integration, which should have resulted in a monetary union, as well as in the multiple advantages associated with the single currency. These advantages were fundamentally economic, but also related to identity, strengthening the international profile in other areas, and even the creation of rapport and peace between the two eternal rivals, France and Germany. The recent crisis has served to relativize this perspective and has given credence to an alternative narrative that questions those foundations, envisaging the single currency as a factor provoking inequality among the euro area countries and even the disintegration of the European Union".[41] Nevertheless, we see contributions that are clearly positive in relation to the euro at this point in time and thus with the monetary and economic union process, according to which "'Failed experiment' and 'error' are regular definitions of the euro by economists and politicians both in and outside the EU. The support of Eurozone citizens, however, continues strong fifteen years after the euro's introduction. Why? Fear doesn't explain everything".[42]

Thirdly, the transcendental challenge of the UK's departure from the European Union must be confronted. Known as Brexit,[43] the British authorities activated Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon on 29 March 2017, based on the results of the 23 June 2016 referendum (albeit, it is true that currently—more than two years later—we find

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[40]C. Plaza-Colodro: *El Norte de Castilla*, 28-04-2017 and Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012).

[41]Spanish periodical *Ayer*, 103 (2016-3-), pp. 213–214 and Márkaris (2012).

[42]Otero-Iglesias (2017, 84–93).

[43]Ruiz Navarro Pinar (2018, 393–394).

ourselves in what could be the last extension before said withdrawal, the extension expiring at midnight on 31 October 2019, in a pitiful example of negotiations on fruitless agreements).

> Article 50. /1. Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements. /2. A Member State which decides to withdraw shall notify the European Council of its intention. In the light of the guidelines provided by the European Council, the Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that State, setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union. That agreement shall be negotiated in accordance with Article 218(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It shall be concluded on behalf of the Union by the Council, acting by a qualified majority, after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament. /3. The Treaties shall cease to apply to the State in question from the date of entry into force of the withdrawal agreement or, failing that, two years after the notification referred to in paragraph 2, unless the European Council, in agreement with the Member State concerned, unanimously decides to extend this period. /4. For the purposes of paragraphs 2 and 3, the member of the European Council or of the Council representing the withdrawing Member State shall not participate in the discussions of the European Council or Council or in decisions concerning it. A qualified majority shall be defined in accordance with Article 238(3)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. /5. If a State which has withdrawn from the Union asks to re-join, its request shall be subject to the procedure referred to in Article 49.

As things stand, the vote for Brexit indeed generated a strange feeling amongst analysts from the time of the decision forward, given that it can be interpreted by some as the failure of the integration process,[44] whilst for others, this option opens up the possibility of re-orienting the European Union without the British burden.[45] In this sense, the UK has been perceived similarly to a rock in the shoe of the European process. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that for the UK itself, the withdrawal process from the European Union may necessarily be fatal to its own existence as we now know it, given that in Scotland—where the majority voted to remain—the all-too-apparent possibility of a new referendum to leave the UK has again been raised so as to later request admittance to the European Union as a sovereign state. In any event, and as Jorge Dezcallar has explained, "The first aim of Europeans is to ensure that Brexit is an exception and not a precedent. That will depend on the way in which negotiations with the United Kingdom proceed inasmuch as how the new northerly-southerly balance and the Franco-German balance within the EU are articulated".[46] With regards to Spain, one should not overlook the new situation concerning Gibraltar,[47] this being the moment, as Rock of Gibraltar analysts have pointed out regarding its co-sovereignty, for a first step towards resolving an age-old and inadmissible colonialism issue.

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[44]Mangas Martín (2016, 427–437).

[45]Fernández Navarrete (2018, 326–342).

[46]Dezcallar (2017, 104–114).

[47]Mangas Martín (2016b, 3–16).

In fourth place, the territory of the European Union should continue to be known as a place of freedom and safety through effective action against Salafi jihadist terrorism,[48] which currently troubles, and in many cases, provokes terror in Europeans. This is why ensuring its utter defeat must be a priority. "In general, jihadist-Salafism affirms the duty of jihad for all Muslims. This is the core idea of their doctrine. There are local jihadists, such as in Palestine, who do not seek to establish a worldwide caliphate, and international jihadists, the idea to which members of Al-Qaida ascribe. The latter fight for the establishment of Islam throughout the world".[49]

Right now, the former is especially obvious in countries including the UK, France, Belgium and Germany, not to mention Spain. As indicated by experts, this is the reason why a more effective relationship between police and intelligence, security and media services in both European countries and their non-European allies is unquestionably necessary. In the words of Fernando Reinares, "As of right now, the jihadist threat in western Europe springs from two general sources: on the one hand, the so-called 'Islamic State' (ISIS), and on the other, Al-Qaeda and its branches and like-minded entities. A threat directly or indirectly related to Al-Qaeda existed up through 2013, the organisation having formed in 1988. For approximately twenty-eight years, this was the only framework for global jihadism. However, since 2014, the jihadist terrorist threat in western Europe has also stemmed from ISIS, comprised of what had previously been the Iraqi branch of Al-Qaeda, although now it is a competing organisation that has become its rival for hegemony in global jihadism".[50] This is the state of affairs. As Judy Dempsey states it, "Protecting [European] values and dealing with war [seem] almost a contradiction in terms. However, this is the challenge set before the European Union in the light of terrorism on the continent".[51,52]

Fifth and lastly (so as to avoid making this list an endless one), the members of the European Union must together find a coherent common solution to which all Member States agree on the migration—and therefore, necessarily and foremost, humanitarian—crisis.[53] It is estimated that one million people arrived abruptly to European territory in 2015, taking advantage of Turkey's laxity and the virtual power vacuum in Greece at that time. It is calculated that this number may have doubled through 2017. In the words of Michel Agier, "Today, the planet is home to 65 million refugees and displaced peoples. For want of reception policies, many of them are compelled to live in camps, as something akin to open-air prisons whose residents are deprived of basic rights".[54] The root of this need is found in the conflict scenarios experienced in the Middle and Near East (Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria …), not to mention northern Africa (Libya) or the Sahel (Mali and other countries in the region). The latter are considered the southern border of Europe and therefore are the highest priority zones

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[48]Balázs (2017, 26).

[49]Larroque (2016, 38).

[50]Reinares (2016, 52–53).

[51]Dempsey (2016, 28–31).

[52]T.N. Own translation from Spanish.

[53]Balázs (2017, 26–30) and Letta (2017, 147–159).

[54]Agier (2017, 15).

in terms of common security and defence policies. All of this directly affects all EU community countries, whose half-hearted resolve is generating much criticism and perpetuating a situation of intolerable suffering for migrants and refugees.

As explained in the Commission's July 2016 document,[55] "The European Union and the Refugee Crisis", we are reminded that "In the last 2 years, Europe has experienced the greatest mass movement of people since the Second World War". In such a difficult situation, the European Union has enacted a series of measures that address the root causes of this diaspora in order to focus the problem and resolve it to the degree possible. The European Union would thereby be providing "humanitarian assistance and development aid", be committed to the "rescue at sea" of displaced persons in the Mediterranean, and to "protecting the borders of the European Union" and fighting "criminal networks". It would also be promoting Member State actions to "relocate and resettle" asylum seekers and, likewise, "return irregular migrants with no right to stay in the EU to their home country", in addition to permanently supporting "agreement with Turkey" in order to prevent undesirable situations such as the one that took place during the summer of 2015. Additionally, the European Union is considering a reform of its rules on asylum, thus explained in the aforementioned factsheet: "Although the EU started to develop a common asylum policy in 1999, the rules were never designed to cope with a massive number of people arriving in a short space of time. New proposals are now on the table from the Commission to revise the existing laws in line with current and future needs. The basic principle will remain the same [meaning, pursuant to Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013, also known as the Dublin III Regulation, in force since 1 January 2014]—people should apply for asylum in the first EU Member State they enter unless they have family elsewhere—but whenever a Member State is overwhelmed, there must be solidarity and a fair sharing of responsibility within the EU".

3 Final Note (as a Provisional Conclusion)

The crossroads the European Union is facing having been presented together with the possible scenarios or paths forward, and the European Union being committed to responding to the great challenges of the present as well as those of the future, it can be asserted that the most desirable action would be, as has been stated before, to slowly yet steadily deepen the monetary and economic union currently in place. This is the great challenge to which all twenty-seven Member States must be committed, omitting the UK (although the threshold of thirty may be reached sooner than later considering the proposed integrations currently under negotiation). It should also be noted that this step would be in consonance with the aspirations of the founding fathers of the now almost 70-year-old European Community to found a community that guarantees peace amongst Europeans, is open to all states in Europe, is institutionally stable, promotes improved social and economic development and is

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[55]Pinyol-Jiménez (2019, 68–74).

committed to democracy and human rights. This would be a European Union whose leaders, like Robert Schuman in 1963, would be able to continue to affirm to the Europeans of their time in 2023 (to create a round number) that "the balance sheet remains positive".

In this regard, and thus committed to said scenario, the open letter promoted by the University Institute for European Studies/CEU and presented to the Spanish and European public together for their opinion during the first quarter of 2017 in order to assert the European ideal on the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome should be mentioned. Said letter, entitled "A genuine European Union to ensure welfare, security and democracy", states that "Democracy and the core values of the European modern civilisation are under attack. The European Union itself is questioned, although it ensured peace, democracy and welfare for decades", later exhorting EU leaders to "(…) match the vision of the Founders. They should open the way to the re-foundation of the EU on the basis of the European Parliament proposal (…)". In any case, beyond the words—re-found, reinvent, etc—the aspiration must be, as exemplified by the aforementioned open letter, to replenish and renovate the European ideal as it was founded, upon the three ideas that underpin the integration process: peace amongst Europeans, socio-economic well-being and good democratic governance. If we are determined to question the European Community process in progress since the 1950s (which, by the way, is about to celebrate seventy years in the making), everything we have achieved together—and that is no small amount if you look at it—would be destined to loss. In an atmosphere of collective amnesia, this could lead us to dust off the old spirits of division and conflict and—who knows?—re-concoct the brew that would push us towards a new collective catastrophe, a third Armageddon, when but one hundred years have passed since the first one. As stated at the outset of this work, to eradicate our worst thoughts and deeds, "If the European Union didn't exist, it would be necessary to invent it". Yet, it has been "invented", and it is on its feet. That it remains so is the task of all Europeans committed—in good faith, as has been said—to the European ideal in operation for nearly seventy years.

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