European Union Integration, Perspectives and Challenges

Gerta Gorjani Xhaferi

Ilia Ilia

Universiteti "Aleksander Moisiu",
Durres, Albania

Abstract

European integration is a process whereby states commit themselves to become part of it, considering that this process requires the approximation of legislation with the basis of Acquis Communautaire . From this perspective we would say that this process affects all spheres ofsocial life. We see this in terms of building democratic institutions and aligning institutional basis with the Acquis Communautaire. Fundamental values and traditions of the Albanian nationdoes not weaken, but rather they become more intense walking in the way of good maturity and Function democracy principles that it carries. This process needs to joint within its elements on common fields which compose the basis of a civil society with fundamental values and traditions, a communion of values based on law and legality, communion of interests and communion of actions so that the European integration can be seen as the intersection of a wide intercultural segment of a moral, political and ideological nature. We can say that the European Union can be considered, as a whole, a regionally integrated institution in which the relations between states can be considered to a large extent an example of globalization. Today European Union faces post-pandemic challenges and Ukraine's war with Russia. Beginning with the desire to gain certain advantages at the level of the European Union, but especially for reasons of electoral image, the UK's exit initiative was turned into reality by the British vote.

Keywords: *EU, challenges, integration, prespektive*

1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic partnership that represents a unique form of cooperation among sovereign states. It is the latest stage in a process of European integration begun after World War II, initially by six Western European countries, to promote peace and economic recovery[69]. Its founders hoped that by pooling sovereignty in certain sectors (primarily economic ones at first), integration would foster interdependence and make another war in Europe unthinkable[70].

Various European policymakers and analysts have likened the European integration project to a bicycle, which must keep going forward to avoid falling over. Currently, however, the EU faces a range of political and economic pressures—including successful populist, antiestablishment political parties in many EU countries—and multiple internal

---

[69]*Congressional Research Service, The European Union: Ongoing Challenges and Future Prospects, 2018, (The European Union: Ongoing Challenges and Future Prospects (fas.org))*
[70]*Congressional Research Service, The European Union: Ongoing Challenges and Future Prospects, 2018, (The European Union: Ongoing Challenges and Future Prospects (fas.org))*

and external challenges, which have raised questions about the EU's future shape and character[71]. Although many experts maintain that the EU will continue to pedal along, others worry that the EU bicycle appears wobbly.

The history of Europe and the history of the European Union are not the same, although there are many meeting points in different historical moments. The term "European Union" belongs to the twentieth century, while the term "Europe" dates much earlier[72]. The term "Europe" was first used during Greek civilization, but in two contexts: one mythological and the other geographical[73].

World War II was the worst for humanity in terms of material and human damage. Although the conflict had a more pronounced global dimension than in the First World War, the main victim of this confrontation became Europe. The total number of victims reached almost 40 million, of whom more than half were civilians. After the deportations and deportations that took place during the war, in 1945 there were about 20 million people waiting to be repatriated[74]. Unprecedented racial, religious and political persecution and mass deportations to labor and concentration camps had caused much hatred among the peoples of Europe.

The Germans were engulfed by a sense of guilt, which became the cause of an intense ethical debate, but which only resulted in the addition of the general chaos that prevailed among the defeated German nation[75]. Europe was devastated and in complete confusion: factories and roads were destroyed, traditional trade displaced, agriculture dilapidated, and meanwhile raw materials and food were lacking. The war was prolonged by the purge and settlement of old accounts, which was once again creating divisions in the liberated countries.

1.1 What is the European Integration?

European integration is a process on which every state that has become a member of the EU or intends to become part of it, must pass several stages of the integration process. European integration itself is a process whereby countries undertake to meet the necessary criteria and adjusting the legislative and economic principles-cultural EU. States that join the EU leave a part of their sovereignty.

This process needs to joint its elements in the common areas, which form the basis of a civil society with values and traditions were basic, a community of values above the law or legality, community interests and community actions that European integration conceived as a crossroads a wide range of intercultural nature moral, political and ideological.

Integration should not be mistaken as a simple elimination of borders, which will enable free movement towards richer countries of Europe. Integration into the European Union means, firstly, aligning and embrace the fundamental values on the basis of tëcilat is built and lives this great body interstate. From the clarification the concept of integration, we can say that the different directives adopted by the treaties on which the EU functions, affect each member state unify.

1.2 The Idea and Theories of European Integration

The idea of a united Europe has always been an inspiration in the minds of many visionaries and philosophers such as. Saint-Simon (creation of the European Confederation) Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Europe of the peoples - federation of states), Victor Hugo (United States of Europe) Emanuel Kant (idea of a permanent peace) Koundehov-Kalergi (pan-European idea) etc. inspired by human ideals[76].

Theories of European integration are based on several concepts which we will define by adhering to their use in these theories. Moreover, it is precisely the following concepts that focus the debate between those who practice integration and those who observe it from the position of the researcher.

a) Sovereignty - the legal capacity of national decision-makers to make decisions, without being subject to external constraints. This is usually called national sovereignty and sometimes state sovereignty.

b) Intergovernmentalism - refers to agreements through which nation states, in situations and conditions controlled by them, cooperate with each other on issues of common interest. The existence of control, which allows all participating states to decide on the level and nature of this cooperation, proves that national sovereignty is not directly damaged (ie

[71]*Congressional Research Service, The European Union: Ongoing Challenges and Future Prospects, 2018, pg 10)*

[72]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg 3*

[73]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg 3*

[74]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg4*

[75]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg8*

[76] *Mark A., The Engines of European Integration, New York: 2003, Oxford University Press,pg155-203*

not linearly, but in a complex way).

c) Supranationalism - states cooperate in a way that does not allow them to maintain full control over concrete developments. In other words, states may be forced to act against their preferences and will because they do not have the power to stop decisions. In this way, supranationalism places inter-state relations beyond cooperation and towards integration, and also implies a kind of loss of national sovereignty.

European integration scholars have explored a number of ways in which the integration process can be theoretically conceived. The aim of this exploration is to develop an understanding of the factors on which European integration is based and thus enable predictions about the path that integration can follow in the future[77].

The essence of law and politics are similar, if not identical. If the power, will, and authority of politics, then the law is an expression of these characteristics in particular form, which made them accurate and knowledgeable in a given situation[78]. Can we then seek to make political integration without the rule of law?

2. European Union, Perspectives and Challenges

The integration process has not been so smooth. While in the first decade there was a very rapid progress of the community, further integration was almost blocked in the 1970s[79]. This was partly due to the economic turmoil of the 1970s[80]. European countries which depend heavily on external energy supplies suffered much the oil market shocks of that decade. Further the aging of the population made social policies very costly in the absence of a sufficient income base which could pay for them. In the face of these economic crises, many European countries were reluctant to undertake to bear the short-term costs (such as further tariff reductions) for the long-term benefits of economic integration. Attempts were occasionally made to extend political integration to the European Political Community which could coordinate a number of political issues but soon these initiatives were halted. The 1970s 1980s were the years of the first European pessimism, with ominous predictions about the future of the Community[81]. Instead of deeper political and economic integration the Organization returned to expanding integration by doubling its membership in the 1970s and early 1980s[82].

We can say that the European Union can be considered, as a whole, a regionally integrated institution in which the relations between states can be considered to a large extent an example of globalization. The attitude manifested in the framework of the World Trade Organization and in the process of bilateral cooperation once again demonstrates the European Union's attachment to the values imposed by the phenomenon of globalization. All these lead to an increase in the dependency and implicitly to the vulnerability both among the EU states and in the relations they develop with countries outside the European Union. At the same time, the complex mechanism of functioning developed at the level of the European Union, the exaggerated claims of some countries like Hungary, the reckless economic behavior of some countries like Greece determine the amplification of the effects in the event of a crisis. If to all these we add the protectionist measures that the new president of the United States wishes to implement, as well as some deterioration in the European Union credibility generated by Brexit, the bureaucratic aspects that characterize the European institutions, etc., we can outline the context of the European Union, which requires a series of measures to ensure the progress of the European Union as a whole and, in particular, the effective integration of each Community country.

2.1 Brexit

Beginning with the desire to gain certain advantages at the level of the European Union, but especially for reasons of electoral image, the UK's exit initiative was turned into reality by the British vote. It is fair to say that the initiators of this approach bet on another unfolding of the events, manifesting themselves like that in a public way. Of course, both the European Union and the UK will suffer from Brexit, but the major disadvantages are on the side of Great Britain. The problems for London are becoming more and more complicated if we consider the Scottish separation tendencies

---

[77]*Karen A., "Establishing the Supremacy of European Law", New York: Oxford, 2001, pg 23*
University Press, p. 1-63, 182-208
[78]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg20*
[79]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg20*
[80]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg22*
[81]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg 22*
[82]*Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010, pg22*

expressed on that occasion[83].

It has to be said that Britain has had a somewhat privileged status within the European Union[84]. The fact that the UK was not part of the euro zone enabled it to use the exchange rate to mitigate the negative effects of the global financial crisis[85].

The exit of Great Britain from the European Union gives Germany the opportunity and the challenge to play the first role in resizing the community architecture. The hectic mechanism involved in Britain's withdrawal from the European Union determines that a new European project can be adopted in a few years. The situation is complicated if we consider corruption, the attack on the rule of law and the economic imbalances in some of the former socialist countries currently members of the European Union, as well as the weak performances that characterize some countries with enhanced democracy (Spain, Portugal, Greece, etc.)

The challenges that the EU faces today are many, the first being the crisis and the consequences that Covid has left. The EU today faces the management of the economic and health crisis that has come as a result of the pandemic that has affected the whole world. The EU economy has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) but not only that, below we will explain and talk about the EU challenge and the war between Ukraine and the EU.

Beyond immediate measures to support the economy sector, countries are also trying to develop recovery measures. These include the removal of travel restrictions, the restoration of passenger confidence and the reopening of certain sectors, such as tourism, which was closed as a precautionary measure, and the circulation of goods and services did not work due to the measures taken. Here we have in mind the trucks that import goods from one country to another EU country and beyond. Many businesses did not work. All this panorama gives us a clear picture that the economies of Europe and the Eurozone are already in recession.

To continue further with the Russia-Ukraine war. Here we see clearly how the game is being played between the EU and Russia to establish the New World Order. The EU's biggest challenge in this situation is not only military support and its potential, but also energy generation from Russia. So the EU is today, in the face of the energy crisis, which it is experiencing with rising prices and certainly looking for other potentials to provide energy for its citizens. But not only that, we are facing a refugee crisis on the borders of the European Union. As we see, we are facing challenges that are directly related to the EU geopolitics and its continuation in times of crisis.

The migration crisis, aside from geopolitics and economics, is shaking the most basic and fundamental beliefs of the Union: its solidarity among 28 countries, its ethos as a humanitarian power, and its symbols and policies demonstrating its deepening process[86]. It is a question of border control, migratory policies, political unity, normative and ethical behavior, and foreign affairs.The crisis for the European Union and Europe is dual. On the one hand, the tone of the debate is extremely divided among the 28 Member States. If Germany and Sweden are welcoming refugees, France and the United Kingdom are much more cautious, while Eastern and Central European members have acted against the refugees[87]. On the other hand, if the tone is quite negative, European leaders have been able to find some common position in order to try to address the problem and root causes[88].

Now, two questions remain to be answered: First, to what extent are these extremist parties throughout Europe influencing the debate on migration? Second, are mainstream right wing parties eventually showing their true colors?

2.2 Integration issues

The most dramatic consequences have been created by the third pillar of Maastricht and precisely the common domestic and justice policy which will lead to the complete removal of the borders between the member states. Many states have introduced common border control practices and allow free movement for all citizens of their states. The Maastricht Treaty and then the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 also introduced the concept of the European citizen where Europeans

[83] *Ciceo G., PosibilescenariiprivindviitorulUniuniiEurpene, publicatînvolumulCrizaUniuniiEuropeneșiordineaglobalăîn era Trump. CoordonatorNaumescu V., Ed. Trei, București, 2017, pg 67*

[84] *Ciceo G., PosibilescenariiprivindviitorulUniuniiEurpene, publicatînvolumulCrizaUniuniiEuropeneșiordineaglobalăîn era Trump. CoordonatorNaumescu V., Ed. Trei, București, 2017, pg 67*

[85]*Dăianu D., Brexit - o explicațiemaiamplă, publicatînvolumulCrizaUniuniiEuropeneșiordineaglobalăîn era Trump. CoordonatorNaumescu V., Ed. Trei, București, 2017, pg 56*

[86]*Maxime H. A. Larivé, A Crisis for the Ages The European Union and the Migration Crisis, 2028, pg 2.*

[87]*European Commission. 2014. "Memo. Frontex Joint Operation 'Triton' – Concerted efforts to manage migration in the Central Mediterranean." October 7. Brussels. Online at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-566_en.htm*

[88]*Human Right Watch. 2015. "Eritrea." Online: https://www.hrw.org/africa/eritrea*

can work, own property, vote and even run for office, elected positions in any European country in which they are resident[89]. In many ways these things challenge the notion of state sovereignty and because of the problems that arise in this sense, more states choosing to stay out of some of Maastricht's most important obligations. These issues of deeper integration have taken second place in relation to the issues of wider integration, enlargement. In this period the main concern for the EU was enlargement and not deepening. Many other countries in Europe are looking at the economic and political benefits of joining the organization and are knocking on the door of the EU.

Despite the expansion and deepening of EU integration, there are both economic and political difficulties. Although the existing membership is highly diversified, they all have economies developed in comparison to the countries seeking membership. Many in the EU are concerned that the addition of new members will require very costly investments in infrastructure, technology and the education system. On the other hand many of the countries that will join have agrarian economies. Agricultural subsidies make up almost half of the EU budget. With the membership of the new countries, another 15 billion Euros will be added to the subsidy fund for agriculture[90]. If subsidies are cut then the market of EU countries will be flooded with cheaper products of new countries which is opposed by very strong interest groups within the EU, so there are political consequences[91]. Many others insist that before Turkey is admitted it must significantly improve the human rights situation, the situation of the Kurds and relations with Greece. Many in Turkey see this as hypocrisy and think that the EU hides prejudices against the Muslim population. But even if all these problems are solved, the enlargement of the WB makes it more difficult to govern and even less capable of having a common foreign and security policy.

There is a concern and not without reason that the whole organizational structure of the EU will be overloaded with more ministers in the Council of Ministers with more Commissioners in the Commission and more Members in the European Parliament not to mention in more languages used. Above all more national interests become that will have to be harmonized which means that further integration becomes very difficult[92]. That is why the idea of a two-tier EU has been tossed out, the first tier consisting of those states that are capable and willing to go one step further towards deepening integration and another tier with less, with a higher level low integration with each other. The Lisbon Treaty constitutes an important restructuring of EU structures to make the EU more accountable, democratic and less accountable. Voting procedures have been improved since the Treaty of Nice. This treaty entered into force in 2003 despite strong opposition to it.

Already the debate is turning the EU back to the discussion between federalists and functionalists or neo-functionalists as two possible paths to the future. The biggest controversy is between those two ideas whether it will go towards federalism or not.

3. Conclusion

The European Union is an economic, political and military organization where its member states have delegated their sovereignty to this institution. this international organization has always had its developments on integrity according to the conditions set out in the treaties, which have realized the progress of the EU.

From the above we conclude that the EU today is facing a major challenge among countries seeking to integrate into this organization and today the EU is facing some very difficult challenges such as the post-pandemic situation and the Ukraine-Russia war. but, it is worth noting that the first challenge of the EU was at the time of the exit of the GB, otherwise known as Brexit.

References

Ciceo G., PosibilescenariiprivindviitorulUniuniiEurpene, publicatînvolumulCrizaUniuniiEuropeneșiordineaglobalăîn era Trump. CoordonatorNaumescu V., Ed. Trei, București, 2017, pg 67

---

[89] *European Commission. 2015. "Syrian Crisis. Factsheet." September. Online: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries /factsheets/syria_en.pdf.*

[90]*Dăianu D., Brexit - o explicațiemaiamplă, publicatînvolumulCrizaUniuniiEuropeneșiordineaglobalăînera Trump. CoordonatorNaumescu V., Ed. Trei, București, 2017, pg 90*

[91]*Marchievici C., Crizacrizelor din UE poatepurta un numegerman, Cotidianul.ro, 21, septembrie 2016: http://www.cotidianul.ro/criza-crizelor-din-ue-poate-purta-un-nume-german-288222*

[92]*Marchievici C., Crizacrizelor din UE poatepurta un numegerman, Cotidianul.ro, 21, septembrie 2016: http://www.cotidianul.ro/criza-crizelor-din-ue-poate-purta-un-nume-german-288222*

Dăianu D., Brexit - o explicațiemaiamplă, publicatînvolumulCrizaUniuniiEuropeneșiordineaglobalăîn era Trump. CoordonatorNaumescu V., Ed. Trei, București, 2017, pg 56

Hoti D., IntegrimiEuropiandheinstitucionet e tij, UMSH 2010

Mark A., The Engines of European Integration, New York: 2003, Oxford University Press

Maxime H. A. Larivé, A Crisis for the Ages The European Union and the Migration Crisis, 2028,

Congressional Research Service, The European Union: Ongoing Challenges and Future Prospects (The European Union: Ongoing Challenges and Future Prospects (fas.org))

European Commission. 2014. "Memo. Frontex Joint Operation 'Triton' – Concerted efforts to manage migration in the Central Mediterranean." October 7. Brussels. Online at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-566_en.htm

Human Right Watch. 2015. "Eritrea." Online: https://www.hrw.org/africa/eritrea

European Commission. 2015. "Syrian Crisis. Factsheet." September. Online: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/fact sheets/syria_en.pdf.

Marchievici C., Crizacrizelor din UE poatepurta un numegerman, Cotidioanul.ro, 21, septembrie 2016: http://www.cotidianul.ro/criza-crizelor-din-ue-poate-purta-un-nume-german-288222