



THE CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

It was originally believed that in the EU, compromise would always be preferred to disintegration. At the latest after Brexit, it became clear that this is not necessarily the case. Several crises, most especially the ones of the 21st century (e.g. the economic and migration crises, the anti-democratic drift in Hungary and the recent Covid-19 pandemic) have stressed how difficult it is to conciliate solidarity and respect for the rules, shared values and conflicting interests. EU compromises and decision-making have been increasingly criticised for being unbalanced, resulting in the weakening of the willingness of some Member States to transfer their national sovereignty to the EU. As a response to the deadlock that the European integration process is currently experiencing, in 2017 the European Commission presented a 'White Paper on the Future of Europe' which lays out five potential scenarios to steer the debate on the future state of the Union. In order to move forward more efficiently and cohesively in a context of domestic and international uncertainty, the EU has also launched a bottom-up initiative named the Conference on the Future of Europe, which intends to collect and reflect the expectations of European citizens for the future of the EU. This initiative reflects the awareness that renewed consensus is necessary to build the EU of tomorrow.

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