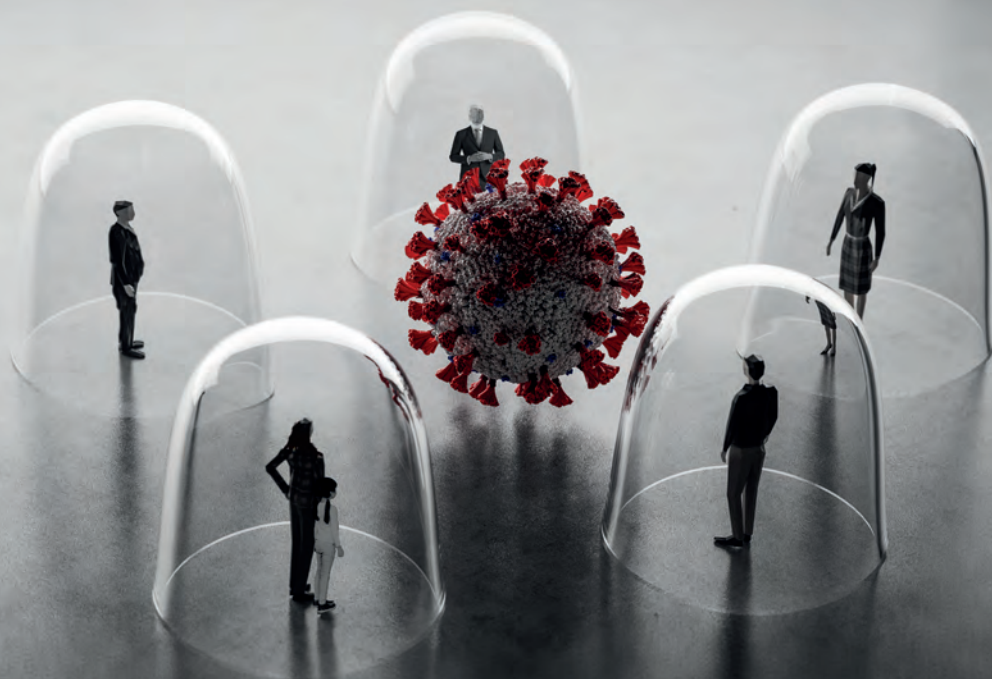


Anna Moskal · Aleksandra Sobarnia
Szymon Pazera · Zuzanna Kopania

THE EUROPEAN UNION IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC —

A FAILURE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OR
A CHANCE FOR CLOSER COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER STATES?



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AMONG MEMBER STATES?**



Cracow 2021

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ANNA MOSKAL

II. Visions of European Integration

1. Early Concepts of European Integration

The official founding fathers of the European Union whose immense contribution to the creation of the EU is admired to this day include Konrad Adenauer, Joseph Bech, Johan Beyen, Winston Churchill, Alcide de Gasperi, Walter Hallstein, Sicco Mansholt, Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Paul-Henri Spaak, and Altiero Spinel-li.¹⁵⁸ However, the most recognisable were the ones from the so called EU triumvirate (three of the largest founding countries of the EU), that is, Konrad Adenauer (Germany), Alcide de Gasperi (Italy), and the duo of Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet (France). These honourable men presented various ideas for strengthening European solidarity and integration.

Generally, three main concepts of European solidarity can be pointed out. The most popular one is functionalism. It was formed in the early stages of the European Communities. Its main advocates were Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman. They believed that economic integration was the key for a peaceful process of transferring some vital power from national to supranational bodies. The spill-over effect was meant to expand onto more important political sectors due to the positive effects of the development of the economic sector.

The originator of functionalism was David Mitrany. He is widely considered to be the father of functionalism and was the first one to propose the use of this term. In 1943 he wrote his most acclaimed academic book titled "A Working Peace System".¹⁵⁹ He strongly believed that in order to achieve peace, European countries have to cooperate on an important matter, as only then they have no reason to wage war on one another.¹⁶⁰ This important matter was, in the eyes of Mitrany,

¹⁵⁸ European Union, *EU Pioneers*, at <https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/eu-pioneers_en>, 20 June 2021.

¹⁵⁹ D. Mitrany, *A Working Peace System*, London 1943.

¹⁶⁰ A. Popoviciu, „David Mitrany and Functionalism. The Beginnings of Functionalism,” *Revista Romana de Geografie Politica*, no. 1 (2010), pp. 165–166.

anything that could have involved an international cooperation, e.g.: technology, trade, ecology etc. This was subsequently called by Mitrany “a working peace system”.¹⁶¹ However, it is difficult to describe functionalism as a solidarity concept due to its different approach to unity. It is much more of an ideology, a way for states to interact with one another. The end goal for other theories of integration is always well known and thought-out. As for functionalism, it is very much an open process.¹⁶² So why should we call it an integration concept when it does not fit the definition? The reason is that even though it is not technically a unity theory, it still has paved the way for other concepts to be born. It is also considered to have laid the foundation for the European Union. Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman were the first ones to take action, and with functionalism as their ideology/ theory, they decided to create an intergovernmental organisation. They both agreed with Mitrany that in order to achieve peace there has to be a cooperation in different sectors, primarily in the economy. After the Second World War the whole European continent was completely devastated, with millions of people dead, crippled and suffering from different kinds of ailments. Monnet and Schuman knew that without financial aid, the countries of Europe would either collapse, fall into internal conflicts or fall victim to communism.

Federalism, on the other hand, is strictly connected with the concept of some form of the “United States of Europe” and it was based on the model of governance in the United States of America. It was meant to minimize the role of independent countries at the expense of a transnational organisation. The most prominent figures that propagated the concept of federalism were: Konrad Adenauer, Walter Halstein, and Paul-Henri Spaak. Others that are not as widely recognised, but nonetheless worth mentioning are: Guy Verhofstadt, Viviane Reading, and Matteo Renzi.

Federalism derived from the Paneuropean Movement which started in 1923 with the publishing of the manifesto “Paneuropa” by Richard Count von Coudenhove-Kalergi.¹⁶³ It was the oldest European unification movement. It is important to note that the movement’s goal was to create a European union, but not by force and not by sacrificing its countries’ independence, traditions etc.¹⁶⁴ Due to the emergence of Nazism in Germany, and subsequently the outbreak of the Second World War, the movement’s actions were frozen in time and place. They returned with double force after the war. Beside Schuman and Monnet, the most important and known representatives of this movement were Konrad Adenauer,

¹⁶¹ S. Konopacki, „Funkcjonalistyczna teoria integracji politycznej Davida Mitrany’ego,” *Studia Europejskie*, no. 2 (1998), pp. 62–64.

¹⁶² Ü. Kurt, “Europe of Monnet, Schuman and Mitrany: A Historical Glance to the EU from the Functionalist Perspective,” *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2009), pp. 47–50.

¹⁶³ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Paneuropa*, Vienna 1923.

¹⁶⁴ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Europe Must Unite* (1938), at <https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/richard_coudenhove_kalergi_europe_must_unite_1938-en-87035567-586c-4a12-99e7-6857ee13f146.html>, 20 June 2021.

Paul-Henri Spaak and Walter Hallstein. Adenauer was determined, as the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, to restore his country's lost glory. By a thorough denazification process, he meant to rebuild the country's image. Having witnessed the horrors of the world war, he believed that the only way not to let that happen again was to create a European union. He valued integration above everything else, even if his decisions met with dissatisfaction of his citizens. As to Walter Hallstein, he was the President of the Commission of the European Economic Community. His term of office was widely acclaimed and was called "The Hallstein period." Paul-Henri Spaak played an immense role in creating the Benelux in 1944, a customs union between Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg. In due course, this enabled the forming of the EU.

The third concept of European solidarity was confederalism based on a notion of the "Europe of Nations." This concept provides for countries to unite, however, not by forfeiting their rights to transnational organisation but rather by working together in solidarity. The intergovernmental organisation was, according to this concept, not to interfere within their internal interests, but to aid and protect them.¹⁶⁵ This vision of Europe is strictly connected with Charles de Gaulle who saw that the most beneficial situation for European countries in their being independent states without supranational authority.¹⁶⁶ Consequently, de Gaulle disagreed with Monnet about this particular issue. He strongly opposed any American influence that could result in the USA taking definite control over the European continent. That is why, with the formation of ECSC, he denounced it. His actions resulted in a French political movement called "Gaullism".¹⁶⁷ Throughout the 1950s and the 1960s he subsequently fought against creating a supranational organisation. De Gaulle was determined and by the end of the 1960s he almost took a decision for France to leave the European Communities altogether while persuading other countries to do the same.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, he and Adenauer did manage to create strong and rather steady alliance between France and West Germany.

Winston Churchill is considered to be one of the founding fathers of the EU. In his famous speech delivered in Zurich in 1946, he called for creating the "United States of Europe".¹⁶⁹ There is no denying that he was actively working for European solidarity and wholeheartedly supported it. The issue that was brought up was his stance on different courses of the EU. Was he a confederalist or a federalist? It might seem an irrelevant question, but with today's Brexit crisis it is an issue that has been widely discussed in the UK. It is worth to mention that throughout his

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 32–34.

¹⁶⁶ D. Matusik, *Koncepcje federacji europejskiej, a europejskie procesy integracji*, Katowice 2009, pp. 36–39.

¹⁶⁷ "Gaullism," *Oxford Dictionary Lexico*, at <<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/Gaullism>>, 20 June 2021.

¹⁶⁸ B. Master, *Teorie i koncepcje...*, pp. 105–108.

¹⁶⁹ D. Ramiro Troitiño, A. Chochia, "Winston Churchill and the European Union," *British Journal of Law and Politics*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2015), pp. 60–65, at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282771987_Winston_Churchill_And_The_European_Union>, 20 June 2021.

career Churchill changed his political stance from liberal to conservative and, in fact, he did so several times. His main goal was to ensure survival of the British Empire. Every decision he made was not achieved by choosing one of the available unity theories, but by pragmatically analysing and adjusting them. Churchill supported some of the aspects of federalism, although his firm stance against surrendering national independence to supranational organisation makes him more of a confederalist.¹⁷⁰ He devoted his entire political career to fighting for the UK's superior role in European solidarity process. The unwillingness of other Member States to let that happen led to a few conflicts between them. Analysing the Great Britain's actions during the forming of the EU seems like a certain foreshadowing of today's Brexit crisis.

The process of the European integration in the early post-war period was demanding and vast. With the looming threat of communism and communist parties existing in every country, all nations became suspicious and concerned. With growing poverty, devastated Europe needed a change, a permanent one this time. After two world wars, Europeans were more than aware that another war would annihilate them. With a common and steady goal of permanent peace and cooperation, the process seemed to be going in a right direction. Learning from past mistakes, this time the countries were determined and took an active role in creating continental unity. However, they had to make a difficult choice between two main integration concepts. Federalism favoured a supranational organisation which would require countries to forfeit some of their autonomy. Confederalism, on the other hand, opted for intergovernmental authority that would assure a full independence of the countries. This dilemma caused a bit of a stir in Europe, especially with France's stance on confederalism. Nonetheless, the process of integration started and accelerated with the creation of the European Communities.

2. Debate on Multi-Speed Europe

Multi-speed, according to EurLex is a "term used to describe the idea of a method of differentiated integration whereby common objectives are pursued by a group of EU countries both able and willing to advance, implied that the others will follow later".¹⁷¹ This concept grew in popularity with every enlargement of the EU. All Member States are unique, with their own economy, culture and a way of living. Therefore, their level of cooperation would also be different. Hence, the concept of multi-speed Europe enables every Member State to evolve in the EU, in their own pace. Countries with the same level of advancement need to cooperate with each other, without the involvement of other Member States. Nonetheless, the remaining Member States would still need to reach the same level of

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 72–78.

¹⁷¹ R. Magdin, R. Georgescu, *Report: two- or multi-speed Europe: can it actually work?*, Bucharest 2016, p. 3.

cooperation, although it would be their prerogative as regards to choosing the time of implementing changes.¹⁷²

According to Fossum, differentiation is “a wider concept that includes, yet goes beyond, differentiated integration. In other words, it encompasses traditional understandings of differentiated integration as mainly consisting of the same integration only at different speeds”.¹⁷³ It is important to know the difference between the two definitions, because they are often incorrectly used as synonyms. The role of differentiation concerns enlargements of the EU, which result in two options: temporary exemptions and discrimination.¹⁷⁴ The first one regards delaying implementations of certain laws and procedures in joining the EU, because at the moment they would be too expensive and invasive to be introduced, thus granting a certain privilege to the new member. The enlargement of 1973 (Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark) had a character of temporary exemption.¹⁷⁵ Discrimination occurs when a joining Member State is not being granted certain privileges that normally come with accessing the EU. Enlargements of eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007 were predominantly of this nature.¹⁷⁶ Exemptions are usually given to countries that are richer, thus able to negotiate their status in the EU.¹⁷⁷ Different treatment of the joining Member States by the EU was later resulting in their different approach to any further integration process. The United Kingdom makes a perfect example.

Differentiated integration process refers to the cooperation of a small group of Member States, without the involvement of other members.¹⁷⁸ A procedure of enhanced cooperation exists within the framework of this process. Differentiated integration process include some main theoretical forms, including: core, concentric circles, variable geometry, *Europa à la carte* and multi-speed Europe.¹⁷⁹ The core revolves around the participation of one group of countries in all available kinds of cooperation, and by doing so they automatically define the “core” of Europe. Concentric circles apply to cooperation between the Member States through different entities, thus creating “circles” around the “core” of European

¹⁷² C. Closa, “Differentiated Integration and Flexibility in the EU under the Lisbon Treaty: Challenges for the Trio Presidency (ARI),” *Real Instituto Elcano ARI*, no. 77 (2010), p. 2, at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/43601837_Differentiated_Integration_and_Flexibility_in_the_EU_under_the_Lisbon_Treaty_challenges_for_the_Trio_Presidency>, 20 June 2021.

¹⁷³ G. Martinico, “A Multi-Speed EU? An Institutional and Legal Assessment,” *Istituto Affari Internazionali Working Papers*, vol. 15, no. 48 (2015), p. 2, at <<https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiwp1548.pdf>>, 20 June 2021.

¹⁷⁴ A.K. Cianciara, “Differentiated Integration and the Future of Europe: Debate in Poland,” *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*, no. 17 (2014), p. 171, at <https://www.ce.uw.edu.pl/pliki/pw/17-2014_cianciara.pdf>, 20 June 2021.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ T. Winzen, F. Schimmelfennig, “Explaining Differentiation in European Union Treaties,” *European Union Politics*, vol 17, no. 4 (2016), pp. 616–618.

¹⁷⁸ C. Closa, “Differentiated Integration and Flexibility...,” p. 1.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 2–3.

cooperation. Variable geometry “is a descriptive model of the system in which, within a common integration scheme, different groups of states participate in different policies”.¹⁸⁰ *Europa à la carte* consists of a pool of different sectors of cooperation, from which every Member State can choose and use those matching their needs. *Europa à la carte* was favoured by the British Prime Minister John Major in 1994, as a way to weaken federalisation of the EU.¹⁸¹ As to concentric circles and variable geometry, they were advocated mostly by French politicians.¹⁸² Differentiated integration is definitely an innovative idea towards European integration. It revolves around considering specific needs of every Member State, which most (if not every) country appreciates. On the other hand, sceptics of this process believe it disrupts the original European process, started with the European Communities.¹⁸³ Despite this, differentiated integration process will most likely remain dominant, since every new enlargement of the EU is making it more and more difficult for the Member States to achieve unity in their decisions, concerning further cooperation in different sectors.¹⁸⁴

Apart from the concept of multi-speed Europe, there is a specific procedure, firstly initiated in the Treaty of Amsterdam, called enhanced cooperation.¹⁸⁵ Described in the Article 20 of Lisbon Treaty,¹⁸⁶ it involves at least nine Member States (at any given time) that choose one, or a few areas in which they will cooperate with each other.¹⁸⁷ Their work is still within the EU institutions, although without the involvement of other Member States. Authorisation to proceed with the enhanced cooperation is granted by the Council of the EU, on a motion from the European Commission and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament.¹⁸⁸ It is important to note that enhanced cooperation is not tantamount to the concept of multi-speed Europe; it is a legitimate mechanism functioning within the framework of the EU.¹⁸⁹

The concept of multi-speed Europe originated at the time of the UK's accession in 1973.¹⁹⁰ It was prominent in a speech delivered in 1974 by German Chancellor

¹⁸⁰ C. Closa, “Differentiated Integration and Flexibility...,” p. 2.

¹⁸¹ N. Groenendijk, *Enhanced Cooperation under the Lisbon Treaty*, Research Meeting on European & International Affairs 2011, Aalborg 2011, p. 7.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ C. Closa, “Differentiated Integration and Flexibility...,” pp. 5–6.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸⁵ *Treaty of Amsterdam Amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties Establishing the European Communities and Certain Related Acts*, Official Journal of the European Communities, Luxembourg 1997, p. 125, at <[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A11997D%2FTXT](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A11997D%2FTXT;)>:, 20 June 2021.

¹⁸⁶ *Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community*, Official Journal of the European Union, Lisbon 2007, at <<http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/lis/sign>>, 20 June 2021.

¹⁸⁷ N. Groenendijk, *Enhanced Cooperation...*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ R. Magdin, R. Georgescu, *Report: Two- or Multi-Speed...*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

Willy Brandt, and was further developed in the report by Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans in 1976.”¹⁹¹ Brandt believed that the Member States which have the same level of development and share the same plans for further cooperation should work together to achieve their goals. It stemmed from the fact that it was mutually beneficial and saved time instead of waiting for many years for other Member States to caught up with them.¹⁹² In the 1980s, Jacques Delors presented variable geometry, and challenged the notion that every Member State wants to cooperate in every sector and on the same levels of evolvement.¹⁹³ In 1994, the year of EU’s crisis, German politicians Wolfgang Schauble and Karl Lamers suggested a theoretical scheme of “core Europe”.¹⁹⁴ The idea of multi-speed Europe reappeared during the Eurozone crisis, in November 2011, when President Sarkozy of France mentioned it in the European Parliament.¹⁹⁵ Just a few months later, in June 2012, German Chancellor Merkel also mentioned the concept in an interview.¹⁹⁶ Despite this, some Member States (like Poland or the Czech Republic) were unconvinced and had a negative attitude towards multi-speed Europe. Mostly because they were reasonably concerned that as non-Eurozone countries, they would be pushed out of the “core” of Europe and not have as much influence in the organisation, as oppose to other Eurozone members.¹⁹⁷

The concept of multi-speed Europe has been actively supported by the so called EU’s “big four,” Spain, Italy, France and Germany, the Member States with biggest economies in the organisation.¹⁹⁸ All four countries are members of the Eurozone, and it is understandable that they want to cooperate with each other in order to achieve the best economic results. If they were to wait for other Member States which do not have equally strong economies, they would lose an opportunity of a quick development. Although it may not be viewed as fair for other, less privileged countries, it is indubitably the most beneficial option for the said Member States. What is more, the analysis of the Eurozone and Schengen area proves that the integration process inside them is working well.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, the countries that seem to have a negative approach to the multi-speed Europe are the same countries that, during their accession to the EU, were not given any exemptions, primarily the Visegrad Group (hereinafter: V4). It is an organisation composed of central European countries, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and

¹⁹¹ A.K. Cianciara, “Differentiated Integration...,” p. 169.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.; R. Mueller, “Critical Analysis of Creative Metaphors in Political Speeches,” in: G. Low, Z. Todd, A. Deignan, L. Cameron (eds.), *Researching and Applying Metaphor in the Real World*, Amsterdam 2010, p. 321.

¹⁹⁵ R. Magdin, R. Georgescu, *Report: Two- or Multi-Speed...*, p. 4.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ T. Sieniow, “Geneza i rozwój...,” p. 58.

¹⁹⁸ *EU’s Big Four Back ‘Multi-Speed’ Europe*, EUobserver, 7 March 2017, at <<https://euobserver.com/news/137134>>, 20 June 2021.

¹⁹⁹ R. Magdin, R. Georgescu, *Report: Two- or Multi-speed...*, p. 6.

Hungary, which are cooperating in order to aid themselves in advancing their European integration process.²⁰⁰ However, Slovakia seems to be the only member that has a different approach towards the European unification, since it is also a member of the Eurozone. Other V4's members do not want to replace their national currency with the euro.²⁰¹ The Czech Republic's main concern towards multispeed Europe primarily regards the matter of joining the Eurozone which they are not willing to do.²⁰² When it comes to Hungary and Poland, both these countries currently have particularly tense and strained relations with the EU. The most controversial and disputed issue right now is Hungarian and Polish defiance of the rule of law. Fidesz, the Hungarian ruling political party with its leader Viktor Orbán who has been the Hungarian Prime Minister since 2010,²⁰³ voiced its negative attitude towards the "federalisation of the EU." Hungary also loudly contests some of EU's policies, especially those on accepting immigrants.²⁰⁴ Poland, with its ruling political party Law and Justice, has a similar approach towards EU's evolvement and expressed its negative attitude toward multi-speed Europe on numerous occasions.²⁰⁵ The main reason why multi-speed Europe seems to be so unpopular in the V4 stems from their fear that they will be marginalised in the EU, and therefore lose their role in the decision-making processes.²⁰⁶

The discussion on multi-speed Europe seems to be again related to the ongoing debate regarding the character of the EU, federalism vs. confederalism. More specifically, the main sources of disagreement come from the fear of some Member States that their sovereignty might be threatened by the federalisation of the EU. After the British withdrawal from the EU, the organisation should be more patient and provide the Member States with solid information on the consequences of intensifying integration. Especially, a clear message should be delivered to the Central and Eastern European Member States.

3. Brexit

Euroscepticism had its deep roots in the UK. Since the 1990s, it started winning a vast support from the British public.²⁰⁷ The formation of the United Kingdom

²⁰⁰ Visegrad Group, *About the Visegrad Group*, at <<https://www.visegradgroup.eu/about>>, 20 June 2021.

²⁰¹ EuroPolicy, *Visegrad Countries and Multispeed Europe: Perceptions, Positions, Strategies*, 2018, p. 10, at <<https://euractiv.sk/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2018/12/EUROPOLICY-ANALYSIS-Visegrad-countries-and-multispeed-Europe1.pdf>>, 20 June 2021.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁰³ He was also a Hungarian PM between 1998–2002.

²⁰⁴ EuroPolicy, *Visegrad countries...*, p. 10.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁰⁶ R. Magdin, R. Georgescu, *Report: Two- or Multi-Speed...*, p. 6.

²⁰⁷ A. Moskal, "The Impact of Brexit on the European Union's Future Development in the Context of European Integration," *Torun International Studies*, vol. 1, no. 11 (2018), p. 28.

Independence Party in 1993, whose main goal was to withdraw Great Britain from the EU, made it more evident.²⁰⁸ After the financial crisis of 2008, the Brexit movement enjoyed increasing recognition and grew in popularity. The promise made by David Cameron in 2013 and the victory of the Conservative Party in 2015 led to the Brexit referendum of 2016. With the process of Brexit being officially finalised in 2021, an important question remains on what the cooperation between the UK and the rest of Europe will be like in the future.

The history of Great Britain has been playing a crucial role in the country's position towards continental Europe. The UK has always been extremely protective towards its interests. Having the advantages of being situated on an island, Britain is quite effectively separated from the rest of the European continent. For the better part of its history, England was mainly preoccupied with conflicts involving its neighbours – Wales, Ireland and Scotland. After their union in 1801, they were determined to keep their borders protected more than ever.²⁰⁹ As a colonial empire, Britain was an important power in Europe. With this in mind, Britain has always kept a fair distance from the rest of the European countries. None of its alliances was long-lasting, and they were only forged for its own benefit.

Being one of the most powerful countries on the European continent since the medieval times resulted in a certain mindset of the British people. Since they have managed to remain an important state throughout the last millennium, they felt quite comfortable with their position on the continent. The most important thing for British citizens is their sovereignty, protected at all costs. It is also important to note that England managed to never lose its independence, and more or less avoid any big revolutions that might have jeopardised its existence.²¹⁰ In comparison to its biggest foe, France, whose revolution of 1789 changed the state completely, the UK remained fairly stable. It is quite astonishing that the country of that size and magnitude managed to survive almost unchanged for centuries. This is why its approach, especially to the European integration process, is not really that surprising.²¹¹ British people believe that their country's interests always come first. Although they have actively participated in cooperation with the EU, it was always due to their certainty that it was beneficial for them. The analysis of British history suggests that Brexit was a long time coming.²¹²

²⁰⁸ M. Kenny, I. McLean, A. Paun (eds.), *Governing England: English Identity and Institutions in a Changing United Kingdom*, Oxford 2018, pp. 169–177.

²⁰⁹ N. Davies, *Wyspy. Historia*, transl. by E. Tabakowska, Kraków 2012, pp. 608–617.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 775–776.

²¹¹ G. Mustafa, M. Hussain, M.A. Aslam, "Political and Economic Impacts of Brexit on European Union," *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2020), p. 13, at <https://www.academia.edu/44202332/Political_and_Economic_Impacts_of_Brexit_on_European_Union>, 20 June 2021.

²¹² A. Glencross, "Cameron's European Legacy: How Brexit Demonstrates the Flawed Politics of Simple Solutions," in: B. Martill, U. Staiger (eds.), *Brexit and Beyond: Rethinking the Futures of Europe*, London 2018, pp. 7–8.

What seemed to be a major downfall of relations between the EU and the UK, happened in 2010, when David Cameron became the British Prime Minister. Since the beginning of his term in the office, he continuously took anti-EU decisions. This worsened relations with Germany, who thought that the UK was a threat to the integration of the organisation, especially during the crisis of the Eurozone.²¹³ In 2013, Cameron announced the possibility of a referendum concerning the UK's membership in the EU. He hoped that by threatening the EU with a possible withdrawal, he would be able to renegotiate UK's position in the EU. Cameron was in a really precarious situation. On one side, he had the Conservative Party which was promised vital changes in the EU's treaties. On the other side, he had the EU and some of its representatives that were not willing to give the UK any special treatment. However, even though the UK yet again demanded special treatment from the EU, the organisation was still quite understanding and tried its best to accommodate to British needs.²¹⁴ The main goal was to keep on working towards maintaining a steady course of further cooperation between the Member States. On 18–19 February 2016, the European Council reached an agreement,²¹⁵ according to which the UK would remain a part of the Common Market, but its national currency would be protected, as it would not be expected to join the Eurozone. Thus, the UK were to remain an important Member State having all the economic advantages but without furthering their European cooperation.²¹⁶ Cameron was confident that he satisfied the British public and fulfilled his promises. He announced that the referendum concerning UK's position in the EU will be held in accordance with his promise on 23 June 2016.

The outcome of the referendum was negative for the EU. With the general turnout of 72,3%, 51,89% of British citizens voted for Brexit.²¹⁷ The British public voted in this manner as a result of vast anti-EU campaigns in the UK. Their main argument was the financial aspect of remaining in the organisation. They falsely claimed that Great Britain paid European Union a weekly amount of 350 million pounds.²¹⁸ It was a fabricated lie which was later exposed. A lot of British people truly believed that the UK was not getting anything substantial from the EU, and it only financially supported other, smaller Member States. The EU's immigration policy was also a matter of controversy, since a vast number of immigrants came to the UK in the early 2000s.²¹⁹ The idea that Great Britain has a sudden problem

²¹³ B. Koszel et al., "Na drodze do Brexitu," *Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego*, no. 234 (2016), pp. 1–2, at <<https://docplayer.pl/39692245-Na-drozdze-do-brexitu-biuletyn-instytutu-zachodniego-bogdan-koszel.html>>, 20 June 2021.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 3–4.

²¹⁷ A. Moskal, "The Impact...", p. 29.

²¹⁸ J. Skrzydło, "Refleksje o Brexicie na tle secesji południowych stanów USA w latach 1860–1861," in: J. Barcik, M. Półtorak (eds.), *Unia Europejska w przededniu Brexitu*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 13–14.

²¹⁹ M. Kenny, I. McLean, A. Paun (eds.), *Governing England: English Identity...*, pp. 166–167.

with immigrants due to the EU is truly nonsensical. The UK, as a former colonial power had and still has a significant number of immigrants from all of their former colonies. And the fact that in the last few decades Great Britain did experience some major crises while being an active Member State, for many was seen as the EU's fault. The negative outcome wasn't just a British concern. Without Great Britain to counterbalance Germany and France in the EU, the Franco-German alliance might overtake the organisation. For other, smaller Member States, Brexit created a situation where their position in the EU became threatened.

Before the Treaty of Lisbon, leaving the EU was not legally possible. Neither the European Communities nor the European Union mentioned that possibility in their treaties. Even though leaving EU was potentially possible based on the general rules of international treaties, no state attempted to do it, so the issue remained a theoretical one. During the Lisbon Treaty reforms in the EU, a procedure for leaving it was created and introduced in article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union.²²⁰ It was simply part of the wide range of reforms in the organisation. According to article 50 of the TEU, each Member State has a right to leave the EU.²²¹ The first step is to notify the European Council, which initiates a process of negotiating an arrangement between the Member State and the EU. British announcement of leaving the EU was formally given by British PM Theresa May to the President of the European Council Donald Tusk on 20 March 2017.²²² Thus the process of Brexit was initiated. Under article 50 of the TEU, parties have a two-year time frame to negotiate the arrangement. If they fail to do so, after a certain time the EU's treaties stop applying to the leaving Member State. However, there is a possibility of that timeframe being extended by the European Council. In case of the UK, the country received three extensions.

After the resignation of David Cameron on 24 June 2016, the new British Prime Minister Theresa May was expected to withdraw the United Kingdom from the EU. At the time, a lot of faith was put in her ability to succeed. Unfortunately for her, she inherited a double edge sword from her predecessor. On one side, she had to fulfil the procedure of Brexit, but in order to do that she had to win the approval of both the government and the public. Meanwhile, negotiations on a withdrawal agreement with the EU were extremely complex and time-consuming. The British public grew restless, getting tired of being stuck in the procedure to leave the EU. In June 2019, after yet another deal was rejected, Theresa May resigned. Boris Johnson took over as British Prime Minister and promised to deliver Brexit, even without a withdrawal agreement. Soon Johnson became extremely unpopular, with the public negatively comparing him to the US President Donald Trump. However, in December 2019, the Conservative Party won parliamentary

²²⁰ *Consolidated versions of the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union*, Official Journal of the European Union, Lisbon 2012, at <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:C2012/326/01>>, 20 June 2021.

²²¹ A.M. Guerra Martins, "The Impact of Brexit on the EU Constitutional Nature and on the EU Founding Treaties," *European Review of Public Law*, vol. 31, no. 1 (2019), pp. 115–117.

²²² *Ibid.*

elections. Finally, on 23 January 2020, the withdrawal agreement was reached. On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom finally left the EU. The eleven-month transition period ended on 31 December 2020.

The Brexit decision was based on a rhetoric that British people should take back control of their borders, democracy and laws.²²³ However, the hopes that Brexit would somehow elevate UK's status in Europe become soon diminished. Leaving the EU turned out to be detrimental to British citizens. The transitional period barely ended, and soon afterwards the British realised that their lives were to become much harder, from the discontinued use some of the streaming sites to a new drop in economy. More than 60% of British firms experienced severe problems and hardship caused by Brexit.²²⁴ The EU also experienced an image crisis due to Brexit, although thankfully the quick reaction of the organisation and the support of the remaining Member States, the trust of the EU citizens in the organisation only grew.²²⁵ Long-term effects of Brexit are still unknown, although one thing which is certain is that the United Kingdom will not be fully satisfied with all the consequences.

4. White Paper on the Future of Europe

The decision of the United Kingdom to withdraw from the EU had an enormous impact on shaping the on-going discussion on the state and future of the integration of Europe.²²⁶ Rather unsurprisingly, with the initiation of the procedure of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, which is set out in article 50 TEU,²²⁷ a necessary

²²³ Ibid., pp. 117–120.

²²⁴ A. Woodcock, *Brexit Causes Difficulties for More than 60 per cent of UK Firms – Report*, The Independent, 6 May 2021, at <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-trade-lse-report-problems-b1842645.html>>, 20 July 2021.

²²⁵ J. Barcz, *Od lizbońskie...*, p. 193.

²²⁶ A. Moskal, "The Impact...", p. 30.

²²⁷ Article 50 TEU:

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.

and valuable debate on Europe's future dominated a substantial part of the EU's 2017 agenda. The debate was conducted in the EU primarily by three EU bodies: the European Commission, which published its White Paper on the Future of Europe²²⁸ (hereinafter: White Paper), the Council, which contributed the most to the Rome Declaration,²²⁹ and the European Parliament, which shared its thoughts on the issue in three reports.²³⁰ The primary of these aforementioned documents was indubitably the most important one in the context of shaping European future, as it initiated a new phase with a wide set of possibilities for how the European Union could evolve in the nearest future. As a result, an unprecedented, wide-ranging debate across Europe was organised in order to engage citizens and to hear their expectations, concerns and ideas.²³¹ Thousands of EU citizens' dialogues took place in various European cities and an online consultation on the future of Europe was launched by the European Commission.²³²

The publication of the White Paper was initially announced by the President of European Commission at the time, Jean-Claude Juncker, in his State of the Union Address delivered before the Members of European Parliament in Strasbourg on 14 September 2016.²³³ Several months later, on 1 March 2017, the European Commission published its White Paper on the Future of Europe leading up to the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome on 25 March 2017. Not only did the anniversary mark up a highly symbolic moment in the history of the European integration but it also provided a great opportunity for raising a fruitful discussion on the EU's future and predictions on its further development. Presenting the ambitious visions of that time, and reflecting on them from an almost five-year perspective, with the COVID-19 pandemic taking over

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 rejoin, its request shall be subject to the procedure referred to in Article 49.

²²⁸ European Commission, *White Paper*...

²²⁹ Council of the European Union, *The Rome Declaration: Declaration of the Leaders of 27 Member States and of the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission*, Press Statements and Remarks, 149/17, 25 March 2017, at <<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/pdf>>, 20 June 2021.

²³⁰ See, e.g., Subchapter 2 "Brexit: Challenges and Steps to Take," in: European Parliament, *The Role and Powers of the European Parliament in the Brexit Process*, 2017, at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/602054/IPOL_IDA%282017%29602054_EN.pdf>, 20 June 2021.

²³¹ See, e.g., Subchapter 2 "Brexit: Challenges and Steps to Take," in: European Parliament, *The Role and Powers of the European Parliament in the Brexit Process*, 2017, at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2017/602054/IPOL_IDA%282017%29602054_EN.pdf>, 20 June 2021.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ J.-C. Juncker, *State of the Union Address 2016: Towards a Better Europe – a Europe that Protects, Empowers and Defends*, Strasbourg 2016, at <<https://europa.eu/state-of-the-union-address-2016-towards-a-better-europe-a-europe-that-protects-empowers-and-defends/?lang=en>>, 20 June 2021.

Europe in the background, is an opportunity we simply could not resist in our monography.

In its 32-page document, the European Commission highlighted the crucial drivers of change over the next decade. Instead of formulating one unified vision of the future of European integration, the Commission provided five different potential scenarios of the EU by 2025 depending on how its Member States and citizens responded.²³⁴ The Commission aimed to address the highly ambitious question of what future we want for ourselves, our children and our Union.²³⁵ In order to provide a valuable and well-thought-out answer to this question, the Commission determined the most important factors of Europe's future to be, *inter alia*, the inevitable decline of European population growth, the ageing of the European population, economic transformations, globalization, terrorism, unemployment, generational inequality, development of technology and increased automatization, digitalization, crisis of democracy, lack of trust in the existing social models. Interestingly, and quite disappointingly, an expansion of the EU was not discussed in any of the scenarios.

What is vitally important in order to fully understand White Paper is embracing the fact that the five scenarios are deliberately presented as vague thought-provoking illustrations rather than detailed and ready-to-implement prescriptions. The reason is simple: the document aimed to stir a heated and open debate on Europe's future. As the European Commission noted in the Introduction, deciding on the approach to take will not be just a simplistic binary choice between more engaged or less engaged Europe, but a well-thought-out choice made from the range of various possibilities, from limiting current cooperation, to keeping a *status quo*, to developing and broadening European integration.²³⁶ The scenarios were presented in the following order: *Carrying on*, *Nothing but the single market*, *Those who want more do more*, *Doing less more efficiently*, and *Doing much more together*.

The key to fully understand White Paper is not in analysing each scenario as a separate exclusive prediction, but in treating them all as intellectual tools which help to reflect on benefits and drawbacks of various possibilities, as well as their inevitable consequences.²³⁷ Furthermore, the European Commission clearly highlighted that the five scenarios are not mutually exclusive, and they can combine and complement one another.²³⁸ The scenarios are rather short and give a vague idea about what the Europe's future may look like in 2025 if certain choices are

²³⁴ European Commission, *White Paper...*, p. 7.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²³⁷ A. Cuyvers, *Five Scenarios for Europe – Understanding the EU Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe*, Verfassungsblog on Matters Constitutional, posted on 10 April 2017, at <<https://verfassungsblog.de/five-scenarios-for-europe-understanding-the-eu-commissions-white-paper-on-the-future-of-europe/>>, 20 June 2021.

²³⁸ European Commission, *White Paper...*, p. 15.

made. The European Commission did not show any preferences for any of the scenario or their elements, and simply left it up to the Member States and their citizens to decide which features they would like to opt for in the process of shaping EU's future.

However, in the foreword to White Paper, Juncker announced that he would present his own personal scenario on the future of Europe in his forthcoming State of the Union speech in September 2017.²³⁹ This scenario was planned to be published after a broad debate across Europe in the months after the publication of White Paper. The debate included the European Parliament, national Parliaments, local and regional authorities, and European society. Eventually, on 13 September 2017, Juncker proposed his own, alternative, ambitious vision of the EU's future development in his State of the Union Address 2017 delivered in Brussels.²⁴⁰ His additional, sixth scenario could be titled as *The Union of Freedom, Equality and Democracy*. Let us first have a glimpse at each of the six visions of the future of the European Union from 2017.

The first scenario, *Carrying on*, assumes a withdrawal of outdated legislation; intensification of activity in the single market (especially by improving the energy, transport and digital infrastructure); deepening defence cooperation in terms of research, industry and joint procurement; as well as strengthening cooperation in the management of external borders.²⁴¹ According to the European Commission, the weakest point of this scenario is the lengthy process of decision-making, which requires unanimity. This might be problematic to achieve due to different approaches of the Member States and potential conflicts of their interests, goals and needs. This vision could turn out to be detrimental to the unity of the EU. On the other hand, the benefits are seen in concrete results, which are believed to be based on a shared sense of purpose. This first scenario can be summarized as maintaining the *status quo*.

The second scenario, *Nothing but the single market*, is depicted as a huge step backward to the times when the European community was based solely on economic grounds. Unless a consensus is reached between the Member States, it predicts no cooperation in new areas. Moreover, a noticeable regress of cooperation in areas such as migration, security, defence, taxes, environment policies, and humanitarian aid could be expected in this scenario. It would essentially make the single market the main *raison d'être* of the EU27,²⁴² and the non-economic areas would remain in the individual management of the Member States. In case of a willingness to take joint measures, the interested countries would have to reach a bilateral agreement on case-by-case basis. Although the decision-making would be much simpler as it would be limited to economic areas, the *Nothing but*

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁴⁰ J.-C. Juncker, *State of the Union Address 2017*, announced on 13 September 2017 in Brussels, at <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-17-3165_en.htm>, 20 June 2021.

²⁴¹ European Commission, *White Paper...*, p. 16.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 18.

the single market scenario is undoubtedly the least favourable vision of European integration, and, even with Brexit happening in the background, it was evaluated as quite unrealistic and bizarre.²⁴³

The inspiration for the third scenario, *Those who want more do more*, has its origins in the discussion of a multi-speed Europe. Cooperation would be deepened but only in the areas selected by those Member States that are interested in taking common measures.²⁴⁴ Such areas could include defence, internal security, common research, joint procurement, enhanced military, and social matters. A predicted strengthened industrial cooperation is believed to result in a number of advances in technologies, products, and services.²⁴⁵ The scenario opts for a model of open and flexible cooperation, which means that any interested Member States could join the cooperating groups at any time. According to the European Commission, the Member States in the Eurozone, and possibly a few others, would introduce harmonised tax rules and would fight tax evasion together.²⁴⁶ However, there are also some evident drawbacks in this scenario. These include the fact that the process of decision-making would lose on its transparency and accountability, solidarity between the Member States would be selective, and a significant gap in rights and standard of living between EU citizens would occur. Even though the Commission assures that *the unity of the EU at 27 is preserved while further cooperation is made possible for those who want*,²⁴⁷ one could ask a question whether it would be still a unified organisation or rather a cluster of collaborating groups. Although the third scenario could be relatively easy to introduce if all the Member States agree on it, the vision of *Europe à la carte* does not seem to be in line with such EU's values and objectives as solidarity, equality, and universality of citizens' rights.

The fourth scenario, *Doing less more efficiently*, assumes that Member States would set up a minimum standard and prioritise only a limited number of areas which would be strengthened and intensively developed. Cooperation on border management, asylum and counterterrorism policies would be systematic, and the European Defence Union would be created.²⁴⁸ Thanks to a narrow focus in select areas, the EU could reach full effectiveness and innovation in them, and possibly take global leadership in those areas. The question is, however, whether the 27 Member States with different goals, needs and priorities in international policy would agree on developing the same areas in a reasonable time frame. What is worse, the areas which generate the most heated discussions are frequently the

²⁴³ M. Frassoni, *Jean-Claude Juncker's White Paper on the Future of Europe: Five Scenarios Not to Make a Choice*, European Greens, at <<https://europeangreens.eu/news/jean-claude-juncker%E2%80%99s-white-paper-future-europe-five-scenarios-not-make-choice>>, 20 June 2021.

²⁴⁴ European Commission, *White Paper*..., p. 20.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

most sensitive ones from the citizens' perspective. For instance, they include, but are not limited to, state aid, regional development, public health, and social policies. These are vitally important areas especially for people who were not born privileged and who need societal support to develop and improve their living situation. Additionally, in the era of rapid globalisation and wide digitalisation, more and more areas are being connected to one another. In fact, international policies and strategies frequently form an interdependent system and need to be addressed together in a comprehensive manner in order to handle them effectively. If Member States somehow manage to overcome these substantial challenges, the EU would be more coherent and effective. This would also mean a significant improvement in selected industries and policies, including strengthening citizens' rights.

The last, fifth scenario presented by the European Commission in White Paper has been titled *Doing much more together*, and as the name suggests it is the most ambitious and optimistic vision from all presented. In order to successfully and quickly handle challenges that we currently face, the Member States need to share their resources and capabilities, as well as fully participate in the decision-making process across the board.²⁴⁹ Consequently, EU citizens would get more rights, a cooperation in defence and security areas would be prioritised, the single market would be completed in the fields of energy, digital technologies and services, and the Eurozone would increase by several members. The EU could present a unified approach on behalf of the Member States on all foreign policy issues and European Defence Union would be created.²⁵⁰ What is more, the EU would lead in global environmental policies and strengthen its role as the world's largest humanitarian and development aid donor.²⁵¹ Besides the obvious practical difficulties in fulfilling this ambitious vision, some Eurosceptic voices may express their concern of excessive interference by the EU in matters traditionally belonging to the national sovereignty of individual Member States.

The sixth scenario, delivered by the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker before Members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 13 September 2017, was preceded by numerous debates and discussion on White Paper. In less than a year, more than 300 citizens' dialogues have been organised by the European Commission across the EU.²⁵² It is worth mentioning that under the mandate of President Juncker, the Commission successfully attempted to make the decision-making process more transparent and closer to EU citizens. This open approach is mirrored in Juncker's vision, which calls for "a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe" and which prioritises

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² European Commission, *Online consultation on the Future of Europe Interim report*, December 2018, p. 5, at <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/online-consultation-interim-report-111218_en_0.pdf>, 20 June 2021.

strengthening the democracy and the respect for the rule of law within the EU.²⁵³ From Juncker's perspective, unity is far more preferable than multi-speed growth. Regardless of Brexit, Juncker believed that the wind is back in Europe's sails. His roadmap was supported by concrete proposals on the subjects such as trade, industry, fight against climate change, migration, investment screening and cybersecurity. Juncker's proposal included a widening of the Eurozone and Schengen zone, transnational lists in European elections, a fully-fledged European Defence Union by 2025, introducing new European Social Standards Union and implementing Industrial Policy Strategy which has just been proposed by the Commission. Moreover, Juncker also suggested a wide range of major institutional changes, including merging the positions of Presidents of the European Commission and European Council, introducing the European Minister of Economy and Finance, and establishing the European Cybersecurity Agency. In his view, introducing these changes would encourage Member States to work closer together and make the EU more unified, stronger, and transparent.

The five scenarios presented the European Commission in the White Paper and the additional sixth scenario delivered by its President raised heated debate and fundamental discussions on the future of Europe. Although they were generally well received by the EU institutions, Member States and European community, a few significant voices of criticism were raised. Even though the European Committee of the Regions agreed that the European Commission rightfully identified the key priority areas in the White Paper, the institution expressed its regrets that the Commission did not present territorial implications of the scenarios, and did not take into account the multi-level governance structure of the EU.²⁵⁴ The Economic, Social and Environmental Council noted that it was unwise of the Commission to avoid detailed discussion in the presented scenarios and that "the social and environmental dimensions of the EU are not sufficiently prominent, alongside the economic pillar of sustainable development, as central features in all of the scenarios presented."²⁵⁵ The CEEP, the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest, remarked that the EU is not only "Brussels" and that EU citizens are the ones who should decide on the future of the EU.²⁵⁶ Further, the CEEP expressed its belief that the future of the EU could be based only on a combination of three

²⁵³ J.-C. Juncker, *State...*

²⁵⁴ European Committee of the Regions, *Resolution of the European Committee of the Regions on the European Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe — Reflections and Scenarios for the EU27 by 2025*, 11–12 May 2017, (2017/C 306/01), p. 2, at <<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/34c8cd19-99d8-11e7-b92d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>>, 20 June 2021.

²⁵⁵ Economic, Social and Environmental Council, *Resolution on the White Paper on the Future of Europe Presented by the European Commission*, presented by the Office in June 2017, p. 5, at <Resolution | European Economic and Social Committee (europa.eu)>, 20 June 2021.

²⁵⁶ Economic, Social and Environmental Council, *Resolution on the White Paper on the Future of Europe Presented by the European Commission*, presented by the Office in June 2017, p. 5, at <Resolution | European Economic and Social Committee (europa.eu)>, 20 June 2021.

of the scenarios – *Carrying on*, *Doing less more efficiently* and *Doing much more together*, and excluded the remaining two brought up by the Commission (*Nothing but the single market*, *Doing less more efficiently*). Interestingly, looking from the almost five-year perspective, the CEEP was not wrong to exclude scenarios 2 and 4 from its predictions of the EU nearest future. Indeed, during the last few years, the EU has not restricted its areas of cooperation, and the integration of the Member States has been slowly developing in new areas such as cybersecurity, digital economy, space law and gender equality. With a glimpse of satisfaction and a huge dose of warmth towards the European project, the Editor of the monograph also notes that her prediction that “after Brexit, the mix of the first (*Carrying on*) and third (*Those who want more do more*) scenario seems to be the most plausible and achievable given the present Member States’ attitude towards the European Union”²⁵⁷ seems to be correct. Hopefully, learning from the solidarity lesson which we are receiving through the COVID-19 pandemic and considering a rapid growth of digitalisation and globalisation, the EU will eventually move from *Carrying on* and *Those who want more do more* to *Doing much more together*.

Revisiting the six scenarios on the future of the European Union presented in 2017 turns out to be a refreshing and stimulating exercise. There are no doubts that the White Paper played an important role in boosting European morale after the Brexit referendum and depicted a useful roadmap of possibilities for the EU’s development by 2025. Not only did the EU not collapse after the withdrawal of one of the most significant Member States, but it developed a wide variety of effective and successful policies and programs in numerous fields including employment, migration, security, tax, social and environment. Even though many proposals from the White Paper have been already rejected, and surely some more will be rejected in the next few years, the key priority areas were rightly identified by the European Commission, discussed in detail by numerous institutions, and eventually some of them were addressed by the EU legislator. Although the White Paper did not provide a detailed and unified solution to the EU’s problems and challenges, it did much more – it started a lively debate on the future of Europe and pushed forward the European project through the hard times of Brexit. Consequently, the EU became stronger and handled the withdrawal of one of its most powerful members well. It also contributed to building resilience in time of crisis which is indubitably needed and well appreciated in a time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

²⁵⁷ A. Moskal, “The Impact...,” p. 34.

5. Four EU Scenarios for Governance in a Post COVID-19 World

So far, the European institutions have not released any official publications which would present their visions of European integration in the post-COVID era. However, in October 2020, the European Parliament published an interesting study on global trends in external policies titled “Four EU scenarios for governance in a post COVID-19 world. Lessons from natural resources management”.²⁵⁸ Beside obvious information on the EU’s governmental policy, valuable conclusions can be drawn from this document about the potential future shape of the EU integration. Contrary to the previously analysed scenarios presented by the European Commission in its White Paper, the four scenarios proposed by the European Parliament contain rather specific and detailed policy prescriptions instead of being just vague visions. These scenarios are based on two dichotomies: the choice between interests and values and the choice between international markets and international governments. The latter goes back to an old and fundamental dilemma whether the Member States should pursue their wish to be strategically independent while at the same time being dependent on products, services and resources from other countries to meet their economic needs.²⁵⁹ Another striking difference between these four scenarios introduced by the European Parliament and visions of future presented by the European Commission is that this time the EU legislator clearly opted for one most favourable scenario (“Strategic Autonomy”) and declared it as the most beneficial for the EU in a post-COVID world.

There are no doubts that pandemics and epidemics have been a catalyst in human history for millennia and an impulse to redesign national strategies and common policies.²⁶⁰ The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. The first months of the coronavirus pandemic in Europe unfolded an initial period of intergovernmental and nationalistic responses around the Europe, which pushed the Member States to prioritise national interests over common values. This started to change when the EU institutions took more decisive actions to support the Member States in their fight against the coronavirus. Specifically, the recovery funds, vaccination rollout and the EU digital certificates significantly contributed to bringing the Member States closer together. However, it does not change the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic will leave the Member States with an urgent need to address their national health crisis, possible economic recession caused by lockdowns and strict restrictions, and a necessity to reevaluate their own geopolitical position on international scale. Moreover, multiple discussions have been

²⁵⁸ M. Damen, *Four EU Scenarios for Governance in a Post COVID-19 World. Lessons from Natural Resources Management*, a study conducted by Policy Department for External Relations for European Parliament, PE 639.317, October 2020.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ C. Hadjimichalis, “An Uncertain Future for the Post-Brexit, Post-COVID-19 European Union,” *European Urban and Regional Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2021), p. 12.

initiated on the issues concerning natural environment and sustainable growth. The slowdown in business caused by the pandemic gave impulse to think about the human impact on environment and adopting the post-COVID-19 economy policies to be more consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations and the European Union's Green Deal.²⁶¹ Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has also brought back ethical policy dilemma on how to balance interests and ethical values.²⁶² This issue is particularly important in the EU as the global leader in promoting human rights and balancing ethical values with effective economy policies.

In order to lead the Member States in the discussion on the governance in a post COVID-19 world, the European Parliament offers a series of insights into the global trends in external policies. The four presented scenarios aim to develop forward-looking and strategic analyses which can be used as alternative ways of shaping EU future.²⁶³ With a view to provide a structural visualisation for the discussion, the scenarios are located on two axes which respond to two fundamental dilemmas: the balance between market and state and the balance between interests and ethical values.



Figure 1. Four scenarios for action and their shadow-extremes presented on p. 42 of "Four EU scenarios for governance in a post COVID-19 world. Lessons from natural resources management."

²⁶¹ M. Damen, *Four EU scenarios...*, p. 7.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid., p. 2.

The first analysed scenario titled *Competitive Capitalism* is located in the bottom left quadrant of the graph and reflects the modern market-based economy's tendency to move all natural resources into interest driven markets.²⁶⁴ People exploit natural resources for their own advantage and sell them on regulated market either in fair and sustainable manner or with focus only on their own financial profit regardless of the damage to the natural environment. When markets operate in a moderate and fair manner they can be defined as competitive capitalism. However, when markets struggle with unfair practices, environmental damages or social injustice, "predator capitalism" can occur. The *Competitive Capitalism* scenario for the EU should be based primarily on the European Single Market with the acknowledgement that the Member States cannot provide many base and raw materials in sufficient quantities, and thus they need to import them from non-EU countries. Therefore, an open rules-based world economy, based on international trade regulations, remains highly important for the EU in the post-COVID-19 world.²⁶⁵ This requires a unified approach from all the Member States, which need to agree on their common and united position on international scale.

The second scenario titled *Strategic Autonomy* covers the bottom right quadrant, and in contrast to the previous one, it is based on international governments rather than international markets. It assumes an active role of governments in regulating the exploitation of natural resources necessary to fulfil basic human needs. In this vision, the distribution of water and land, the management of forests, food and energy security and production levels are governed by national states.²⁶⁶ The darker side of this graph is described as "imperialism," what expresses a more aggressive expansion of states which compete with each other in access to natural resources and protect their own economy. To avoid it, the EU should strengthen the dialogue between the Member States and combat disinformation from other countries. This scenario also requires intensifying defence cooperation and minimizing dependency on non-EU suppliers.²⁶⁷ The European Parliament noted that "strategic autonomy involves sensitive questions about spending, the development of strategic capabilities, inclusion of EU members that are not NATO members and, last but not least, leadership in and relations with NATO".²⁶⁸

Third scenario titled *Cooperative Governance* is also located closer to international government but in contrast to the two above-mentioned scenarios it priorities values over interests. This model recognises that natural resources are unevenly distributed around the world and countries can benefit from sharing and exchanging their commodities. This cooperative approach is characteristic for many international organisations, including the EU. The downsides can occur

²⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 42.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 46.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

when international organisations demand excessive financial reforms from states, people sacrifice their lives for multilateral security alliances which are not directly related to their home countries, and networks of cooperating secret services spy on their own citizens.²⁶⁹ These disruptions are named “oppressive surveillance” and represented in the darker section. The COVID-19 pandemic has put the EU’s internal cohesion into question and highlighted the existing differences between the Member States, especially in the first few months of the coronavirus’ spreading in Europe. However, the COVID-19 crisis also enabled the EU institutions to acquire additional competences and encouraged the Member States to reconsider further Europeanisation of new fields including public health. In this scenario, the EU shall fight public suspicions towards globalisation by aiming for maximum transparency and accountability, promote global governance through multilateral organisations, and avoid overregulation or measures that can be perceived as “oppressive surveillance”.²⁷⁰ This, however, requires approval and support from all the Member States and a mandate from European citizens.

The last, top left scenario, *Ethical capitalism*, assumes that private actors make attempts to counterbalance market failures by focussing on ethical behaviour of producers and consumers, even without initial government support.²⁷¹ The impact of such private value-oriented actions on market behaviour depends on the number of consumers taking them. When ethical impulses are abused by interest driven markets, “corporate delusion” can occur.²⁷² For instance, it can take form of greenwashing actions which can undermine public trust in noble initiatives. This scenario obligates the EU to support noble initiatives, possibly by integrating them in the early stages of policy-making or international negotiations which can broaden the scope of available opportunities and to increase the Member States’ acceptance of common European policies.²⁷³ However, this might be extremely difficult to achieve given that there is a visible disagreement between the Member States in whether some proposed initiatives are sustainable and worth supporting considering their national interests. Moreover, disinformation campaigns and fake news create another challenge for winning support of the Member States and their citizens.

All four scenarios have their advantages and disadvantages. When policy-makers remain in the central area of balanced actions, the benefits generally outweigh drawbacks. However, when they take more extreme approach, the unfavourable “shadow-scenarios” prevail. Therefore, policy makers should seek to choose a right mix of tools for each occasion, balancing market forces and governance, ethical values and interests.²⁷⁴ Given that national interests of the Mem-

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 43.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 43.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

ber States differ, it will be challenging to decide on balanced joint action on the European level.

Theoretically, all four scenarios can be used to determine potential courses of action in the post COVID-19 era, both internally and in external policies of the EU. However, it is important to emphasize that in a difficult time of crisis the EU needs to remind its Member States of their shared values and common goals, and enhances its own resilience by reshoring parts of its economic activity and strengthening political cooperation between the Member States. Hence, the European Parliament points out to the *Strategic Autonomy* scenario as the “only logical for the EU to move towards in an unstable post COVID-19 world without clear leadership.” It implies that the EU and its Member States will be more willing to agree on sustainable solutions and investing in common foreign policy and defence.²⁷⁵ Not only will it empower the EU’s strategic thinking and capacity of the organisation on the international level, but also strengthen the European integration thanks to increasing transparency and accountability in order to avoid the creation of surveillance networks.²⁷⁶ The authors fully agree with the European Parliament’s final conclusions that “[n]evertheless, the EU should also keep in mind that strategic autonomy is only one possible scenario” and that “[u]sing the full palette of the four scenarios may not sound exciting, but fits EU traditions”.²⁷⁷ Although it is extremely important to remain connected to world markets and actively participate in the multilateral order in a time of crisis, the EU should not let out of its sight the common values and the key EU objectives which contribute to strengthening the cooperation between the Member States and tightening European integration.

6. Summary

Throughout its existence, the European Union has been going through a series of acute crises, which resulted in reconsidering the scope of the European integration, the willingness of the Member States to cooperate and the future shape of the EU. Although many argue that these crises have posed an existential threat to the future of the united Europe, the credibility of the European project has not been severely damaged. Contrary, the EU managed to ultimately respond effectively to the crises and adapt to turbulent times and expectations of its Member States. Throughout the years, the Member States and the European institutions have presented and argued for various and sometimes contradictory visions of European integration. The visions of the European integration have been changing and evolving intensively over last seven decades, and it is simply impossible to cover them all thoroughly in the publication of this size. Thus, the authors brushed up

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

on the most popular ones. Specially, in this chapter, the authors shared a glimpse into never-ending debates between federalists and confederalists, heated discussions of multi-speed Europe, controversies over concepts of the core, concentric circles, variable geometry and *Europa à la carte*. Further, the origins, process and impact of Brexit were analysed to provide a theoretical background for the European Commission's post-Brexit scenarios for the future of Europe. They were later contrasted with recent European Parliament's four scenarios for governance in a post COVID-19 world.

In a turbulent time of crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is extremely important to provide alternative roadmaps for both internal and external policies of the EU. The European Parliament's publication not only presented various visions for potential courses of action in the post COVID-19 era, but also reminded the Member States of their shared values and common objectives. This should give an impulse to strengthening political cooperation between the Member States and tightening European integration.

This publication makes a notable contribution to the highly discussed and lively topic of European integration. It includes a brief description of the origins of the European Union, the evolution of the organisation over the last several decades, the changing visions of the future of Europe, the crises that the Member States faced in the past, and finally, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the current and future level of European integration. This publication provides the reader with novel and very detailed data on the performance of the EU and its Member States during the unprecedented global pandemic. It is a must-read for those who search for the most recent information on the shape and level of European integration, the cooperation of the Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as on the level of trust given to the EU by its citizens. Additionally, this book sheds light on the Eurosceptic disinformation and fake news which have arisen in the past few years and which will continue to constitute a very controversial topic for the next few years.



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