LATVIJAS INTERESES EIROPAS SAVIENĪBĀ

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This issue of the journal is a result of the project "Masterclasses for young political leaders" organized by Latvian Transatlantic Organization, Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Latvian Political Science Association. The project was tailored to deliver the master classes by current politicians and leading academics in political science for young Latvians who have shown leadership skills and intend to build a political career in their future. The aim of the project was to increase political and other essential competencies of the participants and to equip them with essential skills for participation in democratic political processes. Thus, during a six-week period the participants acquired theoretical knowledge, practical skills and understanding of issues such as the importance of democratic values, political participation, transatlantic security and unification of Europe.

The organizers cooperated for the implementation of the project for several reasons. First, the organisations share common values. All three organizations highly value democracy, inclusiveness, peace and justice. We believe that efforts towards europeanization, strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as fostering consolidation of democratic and liberal values should be realized. Second, we believe in the importance of empowering youth. By investing in young people today we will be able to further the democracy, peace and sustainable development of the future as young persons are all participants of the European democratic system. Third, young people have a lot to contribute towards politics. They are full of good ideas on how to improve the democratic system and wealth of our societies at large but they often feel that their views are undervalued in the political debate or they do not have enough access and competencies for full fledged participation. This can be changed through active support of experienced politicians and experts.

The collection of essays written by the participants of the Masterclasses expand on the views of young people. They express ideas and political ideals, as well as defend diverse interests. Therefore, they contribute to a broader discussion about the future of Latvia and Europe. We would like to thank all the authors of this volume for their contributions. It has been a true pleasure to interact with inspiring and motivated young people.

Elisabeth Bauer, Head of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Office for the Baltic States

Toms Baumanis, Chair of the board of the Latvian Transatlantic Organization

Žaneta Ozoliņa, Chair of the board of the Latvian Political Science Association

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Editorial

During the formation of the "Latvian Interests in the European Union" journal, starting from 2011, special editions were assembled dedicated towards specific occasions. In these occasions, the editorial board calls for cooperation among authors, who provide their unique perspectives on the European Union's ongoing proceedings. This journal number formatting also belongs to the special edition.

Midst the first half of 2020 the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in the Baltic States, the Latvian Transatlantic Organisation, and the Latvian Political Science Association agreed on the establishment of a masterclass for young political leaders. In which young adults would be given the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the practical and theoretical aspects of politics.

The masterclasses began in March, however, soon were moved to an online format due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its restrictions. The online classes took place from 9 May to 20 June. Participants had the opportunity to debate themes related to the EU, such as democracy and its values, political cooperation, and the EU's political and economic future. Each week, the participants were offered the choice to choose which topic they will be learning. The educational process began with a lecture on the chosen subject. Following the lecture, participants engaged in discussions through WhatsApp, and were able to later partake in a discussion with the Latvian President, Egīls Levits, Minister of Defence, Artis Pabriks, Internal Affairs Minister, Sandis Ģirģens, Member of the European Parliament, Ivars Ījabs, Member of Saeima, Inese Voika, and other department specialists.

In order to reinforce the newly acquired knowledge, participants were tasked with writing their own essays on some of the issues they found important. This issue compiles the best essays written by young Latvian adults expressing their perspectives and understanding of the EU. They can be seen as a contribution to the ongoing debate in Europe on the future of the EU, which will take on a much broader and more concrete shape this

autumn when a two-year Conference on the Future of Europe will begin in all member states. It aims to discover citizens' mindsets and to formulate priorities for further development of the EU. The essays compiled in the journal should not be considered as a reflection of the results of long-term research, which is typical for the classical academic genre, but as attitudes, specific positions, and reflections that have come to light during discussions about issues important to young people. The ideas and opinions gathered in this issue of "Latvia's Interests in the European Union" can prove useful and even valuable to Latvian and European policymakers, as it is important to understand the viewpoint of all sections of society.

The essays only display a portion of the discussed topics during the masterclasses. A dominant subject debated was the COVID-19 impact on the future of the EU and the daily lives of the citizens. A lot of reference was made to upcoming change which was influenced by the objective reality. The foreseeable changes that will be affecting Europe's future can be found in both the European Union and internationally. The EU is versatile during times of crises and find innovative and diverse solutions. The effects of the 2008 financial crisis, the challenges posed by the growing influx of refugees in 2015, and the uncertainty caused by Brexit are still felt now, however, COVID-19 presents greater challenges due to the individual, national, regional, and global aspects at play. Therefore, any discussion that analyses the areas where changes are possible due to the pandemic and which helps to strengthen the resilience of society and the state is important. The essays indicate the youth's concerns about the spread of populism and radical ideologies, the rise of disinformation, and the questioning of democratic values, the impact of Brexit on the nature of EU-UK economic relations, the EU's ability to consistently follow and live up to its security and defence commitments, and other issues. Though the essays do not lack critical perspectives on current issues, the participants are generally optimistic about the EU's future and its sustainable development.

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The economic interests of the European Union following Brexit

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This essay will examine the economic interests of the European Union following the 2016 Brexit referendum. The purpose of this essay is to introduce a brief history of the referendum, followed by elucidation of ways in which the United Kingdom could cover the economic deficit and different approaches in which this deal could be dealt with favorably to both the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Keywords: Brexit, economy, European Union, trade deal, United Kingdom.

Šajā esejā apskatītas Eiropas Savienības ekonomiskās intereses pēc 2016. gada breksita (angļu val. – Brexit) referenduma. Esejas mērķis ir īsi apskatīt referenduma vesture un noskaidrot veidus, kā Apvienotā Karaliste varētu segt breksita izveidoto ekonomisko deficītu, kā arī dažādas pieejas, ar kuru palīdzību abas iesaistītās puses – Apvienotā Karaliste un Eiropas Savienība – spētu vienoties par abpusēji labvēlīgiem un izdevīgiem noteikumiem.

Atslēgvārdi: Apvienotā Karaliste, breksits, Eiropas Savienība, ekonomika, tirdzniecības darījums.

Introduction

23 June 2016 marked the start of a new chapter of life for the British population. More notably, it was a big change for the European Union (EU), of which the United Kingdom (UK) had been part of since 1 January 1973. The referendum, in which the UK voted to leave the EU by 52% to 48%, resulted in a division of thoughts about the future of one of the EU's biggest

and most influential members. One of the main issues of debate for the UK and the EU that needed to be addressed was the economic question. Given that until its departure in January 2020, the UK had the second highest GDP in the EU and had the second-biggest share in EU GDP in 2017 with 15.2% (see Table 1). More notably, since 31 January 2020 the UK has officially left the EU, the following question becomes more important than ever before – in what ways can both parties reach favourable economic agreements while still keeping their individual interests in mind?

In this essay I will, first, lay out the general sequence of events leading up to the final days of the UK as part of the EU, give the highlights of the four year-long process to "liberty" for the UK. Second, I will look at the options with which it would be possible to compensate for the deficit in the EU budget created by Brexit. Third, I will analyse the positions of both of the parties – the UK and the EU – and their stance on their economic interests regarding Brexit's effect on the EU's economy as a whole. Finally, I will consider what the discussions between the two parties should turn out to be in order for them both to be equally beneficial and to cover the so-called Brexit divorce bill of €41.4 billion[1].

A brief history of Brexit

The idea of holding a referendum on whether the UK should remain or leave the EU was proposed in 2013 by David Cameron. As the leader of the Conservative Party, he gave his word to the public that if his party was to win the election, he would hold the referendum concerning Brexit. After the win, he held the referendum, which took place on 23 June 2016. Both choices to leave or to remain in the EU were backed by two of the most influential politicians in Britain of the time. David Cameron, who backed the choice to remain while Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson backed the decision to leave.

In his last-ditch plea to remain in the EU, David Cameron encouraged the general public to think twice before voting, saying "it will be stronger if

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[1] Owen, J. (2020).Brexit deal: the financial settlement. *Institute for Government*, February 2020, 19. Retrieved   (18.06.2020.) from: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/brexit-deal-financial-settlement

we stay" and that leaving – "it's a huge risk to Britain".[2] Not many of his own kind had the same idea in mind. In fact, Boris Johnson, another representative of the Conservative Party and the then – London Mayor, joined the official "Vote Leave" campaign. He promised the public that leaving would result in an increase of funding for the NHS (National Health Service), which had since become one of the symbols of Brexit.

Another example, Nigel Farage, the then-UK Independent Party (UKIP) representative and now- Brexit Party, was associated with the Brexit campaign called 'Leave.EU', as he had endorsed it. Both populists, Johnson and Farage, motivated the general public, especially the most easily influenced and numerical majority of the elderly, the less-educated and the lower class to keep their country's interests in mind. With their slogans inspiring English nationalism, the restoring of control and dignity, as well as better trade deals and an overall better life for the average taxpayer, they incited the movement towards the end of a four decade-long era of cooperation with the EU. With a 4% margin, the leave campaign won.[3]

Following the Brexit referendum, David Cameron made the decision to resign from his duties as Prime Minister, leaving Theresa May, the then Conservative Party leader, to solve the problems related to the recently announced divorce. With her official statement to the EU in March of 2017 May explained her country's desire to leave the EU. This event marked the two-year period to set and reach a separation agreement between the two parties, which ended on 29 March 2019. This meant that the UK would be forced to revert to a time before the Single Market, therefore applying external customs on UK goods, decreasing euro transactions between London and Brussels, restricting UK citizen's ability to work within the EU and threaten the peace agreement between the UK and Ireland.[4]

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[2] Stone, J. (2016). EU referendum: Full transcript of David Cameron's last-ditch plea for Britain to Remain. *Independent*, June 2016, 21. Retrieved (18.06.2020) from: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/eu-referendum-brexit-latest-live-david-cameron-full-speech-remain-leave-a7093426.html

[3] The Electoral Comission. (2019). Results and turn out at the EU referendum. Retrieved (18.06.2020.) from: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/results-and-turnout-eu-referendum

[4] Blockmans, S., Emerson, M. (2016). *CEPS*, June 2016, 6. Brexit's Consequences for the UK – and the EU. Retrieved (18.06.2020.) from: https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/brexits-consequences-for-the-uk-and-the-eu/

A question that was on the table for both the EU and the UK was the "Irish Backstop" or more formally the Northern Ireland Protocol, which was finalized in November 2018. The agreement provided for the UK as a whole to have a common customs territory without separating Northern Ireland from Ireland. Theresa May resigned in May 2019 after the rejection of the Irish Backstop which signified her defeat, leaving the Conservative Party to elect Boris Johnson to be in charge.

The newly elected Johnson renegotiated May's Brexit deal, which he succeeded in doing. The new protocol entailed that the UK becomes one single customs territory that comes out of the EU, though there would not be any tariffs or restrictions on goods coming to and from Ireland, meaning that there would be a customs border created in the Irish Sea between Ireland and the UK.

Given that Johnson's promised deadline of the UK leaving the UK, deal or no deal, on 31 October was quickly approaching, the remaining Brexit sceptics sitting in Parliament demanded Johnson to ask the EU for more time providing the UK with the option to possibly change its mind. Johnson did just that, delaying the leave till 31 January 2020. After a year-long deadlock and Johnson's remaining popularity, it was certain there was no going back.

On 31 January 2020, the UK officially left the EU.

How can the United Kingdom compensate for the deficit created by Brexit?

In my opinion, there is one main way for the UK to compensate the large sum of money it owes to the EU which is by giving access to the most profitable sectors and setting tariffs. For example, in the situation of "no deal" Brexit, the UK would not only be looking at the creation of new borders, but also at the need for import duties on both UK goods entering the EU and EU goods entering the UK in order to close the gap in the European budget created by Brexit. Three of the most lucrative sectors may include: the finance industry (26.1 billion in exports to the EU in 2018), the food and drink industry (14.2 billion in exports to the EU in 2019)[5] as well as the pharmaceutical industry (9.2 billion in exports to the EU in 2019).

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[5]   Food and Drink Federation. (2020). Exports Snapshot – Full Year 2019. Retrieved (18.06.2020.) from: https://www.fdf.org.uk/exports-2019-q4.aspx

Given the fact that in 2019, not only were UK exports of goods to the EU 43% of all UK exports but EU exports also made up 51% of all UK imports,[6] the question about gaining access to different sectors and setting new tariffs on goods and services is a crucial talking point for both parties. Even though the UK seeks to gain the free access to the Single Market of the EU, it will have to adapt some kind of precedents in order to reach a trade agreement with the EU.

It may be wise of the EU to primarily focus on the financial sector, as it accounts for nearly 80% of the managing and capital markets conduct in the EU27 countries[7]. As London is still considered a European financial centre, there should be plans put into effect to relocate the financial centre to Europe as soon as possible. An important European financial location that could be worth considering could be Frankfurt. It is not only home of the ECB (European Central Bank), but also the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, which is the 12th largest major stock exchange group in the world by market cap. In addition, tariffs should be placed on British banks operating within the EU, such as HSBC, Barclays, and Lloyds Banking Group, which are all in the top 10 largest banks in Europe[8].

Another way of compensating for the damage made by Brexit would be to raise tariffs for goods and services that are imported from the EU to the UK. The services that could be affected the most could be: travel (34.5% of total export in 2018), business services (25.7%), transportation (16.6%), and telecommunications, computer and information services (7.2%). The goods that could be most affected could be: road vehicles (18.2% of total export in 2018), medicinal and pharmaceutical products (6.2%), miscellaneous manufactured articles (4.5%), and general industrial machinery (4.3%). Given the fact that the UK imports more goods and services from the EU than it exports to it, this could potentially be a good point for the EU to

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[6] Ward, M. (2020.) Statistics on UK-EU trade. *The House of Commons Library*, June 2020, 17. Retrieved (19.06.2020.) from: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7851/#:~:-text=In%202018%2C%20UK%20exports%20to,slightly%20to%2045%25%20in%202018.

[7] Wright, W. (2016). The potential impact of Brexit on capital markets. *NewFinancial*, April 2016. Retrieved (18.06.2020.) from: https://newfinancial.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-potential-impact-of-Brexit-on-European-capital-markets-New-Financial-April-2016.pdf)

[8] Business Insider. (2019). Here are the 50 Largest Banks in Europe (2019). *Business Insider*, October 2019, 10. Retrieved (18.06.2020.) from: https://www.businessinsider.com/largest-banks-europe-list

take advantage of. By raising the tariffs on the aforementioned services and goods, the resulting amount could become a sort of relief to the EU's economy, and, in the long run, would provide more support to the EU budget and start to cover at least some of the losses caused by the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

What can (and should) be done in order to obtain equal agreements on both parts?

To start off, we have to take into consideration what has already been proposed to the UK by the EU. The UK is more focused on maintaining as much free access to the Single market for services and goods as possible in order to steer away from creating regulatory barriers. Whereas the EU suggested two previously used models of approach to the trade deal – the Norway (becoming a rule taker with full market access) or the Canada (have a standard free trade agreement) model[9]. Given these conditions, the UK seems to have its mind set on the Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), which would be modelled after the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada, though with the added benefit of agreeing on better access to services and rules on closer regulatory cooperation[10].

In the government-issued publication about the UK's future relationship with the EU, it is stated that the UK would not be interested in ensuring that "there are no tariffs, fees, charges and quantitative restrictions on trade in manufactured and agricultural goods between the UK and the EU" and that "it [the Agreement] should facilitate trade and address non-tariff barriers for UK exports to the EU (such as import and export licensing restrictions) and vice versa"[11]. As for the services, it is said that "The Agreement should include provisions on Good Regulatory Practice and Regulatory Cooperation, in relation to business activities. These provisions aim to reduce

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[9] Institute for Government. (2017). Trade after Brexit. Retrieved (19.06.2020.) from: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/summary-trade-after-brexit

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] HM Government (2020). The Future Relationship with the EU. The UK's Approach to Negotiations. Retrieved (19.06.2020.) from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/868874/The_Future_Relationship_with_the_EU.pdf

non-tariff barriers to trade between the parties, creating an environment that promotes investor and exporter confidence in all sectors."[12]As much as it could be understood why the UK should want such favourable conditions for their trade deal with the EU, I do not see how this would benefit the EU.

Another important aspect to look at trade-wise is the problem associated with fisheries and fishing in general within the vicinity of the British waters. It is seen as one of the symbols of sovereignty that will be regained, which many coastal towns and their communities depend on, it is a very dear topic for the UK to discuss with the EU. Though the fishing industry is not a big part of neither party's economy, it still holds historical significance for both sides (especially France on the EU side, as the British channel is important for both the UK and France). Both the UK and the EU are under pressure from their fishing communities to keep things the way they presently are. From this it could be understood that the UK does not want to back down on their stance to regain access to their waters, though the EU is persistent to keep the amount of boats they have set there up till now, as these fishermen have grown accustomed to these waters. If, hypothetically speaking, the EU were to make concessions and would minimize the amount of EU boats in British waters, they would have to approach the problem in another way. Not only by giving new fishing rights for the EU fishermen within British waters, but also by UK's access to the fish market within the EU. In the view that about three quarters of all UK fish exports are made for the EU and sold there, placed tariffs or taxes would not be beneficial for the UK. These kinds of tariffs or taxes could prove to be detrimental to particular parts of the industry, such as shellfish. This means that the UK has two options in this situation: to either say no and plead "no deal" Brexit (meaning no access to the free market) and allow for the EU fishermen to access the British waters as before or allow to access British waters only partially, while reducing the fishing quota for the EU fisheries. The EU has already stated that if the UK wants to gain access to the free market, it will have to ease its demands for restrictions on fishing in British waters. Seeing as the European Single Market remains the largest

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[12] HM Government (2020). The Future Relationship with the EU. The UK's Approach to Negotiations. Retrieved (19.06.2020.) from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/868874/The_Future_Relationship_with_the_EU.pdf, p. 20

export partner for UK as of 2018[13], it is still a great weapon to use for nego-tiating withdrawal rules. If the UK pleads "no deal" Brexit that would mean it would have to create new negotiation deals with each EU 27 country indi-vidually, which would only slow down the UK's ability to operate smoothly after the deadline ending on 31 December of this year.

The current situation (as of June 2020) with the fact that no deal has yet been reached between the two parties can be closely tied to the fact that the EU has succumbed to the UK's wishes throughout the Brexit process and still hopes that the UK will do the same "in a peaceful manner". However, it is my belief that this kind of attitude towards the UK is unacceptable and should become stricter. Otherwise, the most possible outcome would be that the UK will obtain the trade deals they seem suitable most for themselves (at least in part) but will not want to comply with the demands of the EU on other important EU issues, such as jurisdiction, human rights and climate issues for a long time. In this case, the EU will be made to look as though it is giving up, therefore deteriorating the overall image of the EU. The EU has until the 31 December 2020 to decide on ways in which to ensure that the PM Boris Johnson makes concessions and approves not only rules in trade but also the EU rules on matters such as workers' rights, state aid, as well as environ-mental regulations. It is in the interests of both parties to find a middle ground, but it is more important for the UK, whether its leaders want to admit it or not. If they do not settle these arrangements with the EU by the end of the transition period, they would eventually have to be prepared for meeting with each of the 27 EU member states individually in order to talk through their mutual interests, which in turn would take a tremendous amount of resources and precious time. In this case, the EU will no longer have a reason to help the UK out and as a result it is very probable that this would put a strain on the relationship between the two parties, which would prove to be very disadvantageous for the UK. This would mean that the EU would have bigger grounds to impose higher tariffs and general require-ments to the UK. Therefore, although each of the EU's largest member states

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[13] Clarck, D. (2020). Leading export partners of the UK in 2019.*Statista*, April 2020, 21. Retrieved (19.06.2020.) from: https://www.statista.com/statistics/284708/united-kingdom-uk-largest-export-markets-by-export-value/#:~:text=European%20Single%20Market%20still%20the,of%20UK%20imports%20originating%20there.)

has its own interests, relations with them are likely to become exacerbated with the UK, as they are its largest partners.

Conclusion

Summarizing all the aforementioned thoughts on the EU's economic interests in relation to Brexit, my opinion is that the best-case scenario for the EU would be to impose stricter rules on the UK in order to gain at least some benefit from Brexit. Given that UK's decision to leave the EU represents a loss to the EU not only financially, but also morally it is in the EU's best interests to regain its position as a united force. The EU should consider imposing larger tariffs and taxes on both its imports to the UK and the UK's options of export to the EU, especially in the financial sector and other service-related sectors.

In order to keep the UK on its toes, the EU needs to continue not to compromise on UK requirements on issues such as fisheries and fishing rights, which still remain a pressing topic of discussion for both parties. This means that it is in the EU's best interest to maintain its fishing rights as close to the ones that are currently in place to ensure as little change as possible for the current market and employees in the field. Additionally, it is in both party's interest to steer clear from holding annual discussions with the bloc over access to British waters as that would result in more expenses for the UK. These additional costs, together with Brexit costs and overheads, could drive the UK into an even greater economic crisis. Additionally, as was done in the past, the EU must continue to force the UK to give in to stricter rules for competition in the business field, which is an important matter for the UK, given that the UK still has to plan for a state aid regime at a local level.

However, though the EU needs to reach an agreement with the UK which would benefit its interests, it should also consider Brexit as a sort of wake-up call. It is necessary that the EU starts to review the Brexit situation as a whole to understand what the most significant reasons are which caused this problem to arise in the first place. Although the UK is quite known for its nationalist approach to life, so is every other large member state in Europe – for example, France and Italy. A thorough analysis of the situation is needed to be conducted, as this is a test of the values and the promises made by the EU. If the EU still wants to exist as one, as a union,

it should consider becoming humbler in some aspects. We often talk about persistent expansion, though we seem to forget at what cost it has been done. A lot has been done up until this point in EU history, it has played an immensely important role in modern day politics and has gained a plethora of experience in fields such as finance, negotiation and cooperation, security, and sustainability. As I see it, it is time for the EU to focus on improving its relations with the countries within by analysing the cooperation it had with them until now, as well as understand every member's needs while respecting and exchanging their views on various matters.

There is still a much more pressing matter that needs to be addressed in order for the EU to continue working as the united force and peacemaker it is and perhaps there is a need to change the monitoring of the ruling system?

Eiropas Savienības sasniegumi inovāciju jomā un tās izaugsmi kavējošie faktori

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Eiropas Savienības ieguldījumu apjoms pētniecībā un attīstībā liek domāt, ka tai vajadzētu būt veiksmīgai pētniecības un inovāciju īstenotājai. Zinātnē ES ir ievērojams līderis, savukārt inovāciju jomā tā atpaliek no ASV. Raksta autores mērķis ir noskaidrot, kādi ir ES sasniegumi inovāciju jomā, un kādi faktori kavē tās izaugsmi. Inovācijas ir īpaši svarīgas ES sociālā un ekonomikas modeļa tālākā attīstībā, jo tās nodrošina ideju pārtapšanu produktos, kas uzlabo dzīves kvalitāti. Raksta autore secina, ka kopumā ES sniegums inovāciju ieviešanā nav vājš, taču atšķirīgais dalībvalstu sniegums atklāj inovāciju plaisu. Starp inovāciju procesā iesaistītajām pusēm pastāv šķietami vāja sinerģija. Izaugsmi inovāciju jomā kavē ilgstošas sociālekonomiskas atšķirības starpvalstu, starpreģionu un starpnozaru līmeņos, izraisot dalībnieku nevienmērīgu iesaisti inovāciju procesā.

Atslēgvārdi: atvērtā inovācija, Apvārsnis 2020, inovāciju plaisa, konkurētspēja, pētniecība un attīstība.

The amount of investment in Research and Development suggests that the EU should be a successful research and innovation implementer. With regards to science, the EU is a prominent leader, however it has been lagging behind the USA in terms of innovation. It is concluded that on a global scale the performance of the EU in innovation is not weak, however the internal context reveals an innovation gap. The synergy between the relevant stakeholders within the innovation process appears to be weak. Interstate, interregional and cross-sectoral socioeconomic disparities hinder the performance of innovation which in turn transcends into uneven involvement of stakeholders in the innovation process. Subsequently the Quadruple Helix Innovation model will be adapted for the integration of society in the innovation process.

Keywords: competition, Horizon 2020, innovation gap, open innovation, Research and Development.

Ievads

Palielinoties globālajai konkurencei, Eiropas Savienībai (ES) ir svarīgi tiekties pēc izmaiņām un izvirzīt jaunas ambīcijas inovāciju jomā, taču vienlaikus jāapzinās, ka ambīciju īstenošana mēdz sagādāt grūtības. Turpmāk tām jābūt precīzi formulētām, lai palīdzētu risināt tādas ilgstoši pastāvošas problēmas kā dalībvalstu un reģionu atšķirīgie attīstības līmeņi. Ķīna un ASV ir redzamākās līderes tehnoloģiju un ekonomiskās attīstības jomā, un šis fakts mudina ES domāt par tehnoloģiskā potenciāla palielināšanu un inovāciju attīstīšanu. ES ir publisko investīciju līderis pētniecības un attīstības (turpmāk – P&A) jomā, veicot vienu piektdaļu no visas pasaules P&A ieguldījumiem.[1] ES ir atzīta par vienu no vadošajiem līderiem zinātnē, un par tās panākumiem tiek uzskatīti ievērojamie ieguldījumi P&A un ekselences centru veidošana. Savukārt inovāciju jomā līdzvērtīgus panākumus tai nav izdevies sasniegt, jo ES sastopas ar grūtībām pārnest izcilus zinātniskos panākumus uz ražošanas vai pakalpojumu jomu. Šāda problēma pieprasa sarežģītus risinājumus, jo bieži vien tā ir saistīta ar ekonomikas, zinātnes, pārvaldības, finanšu un pilsoniskās sabiedrības savstarpējās sadarbības potenciālu un iespējām. Pastāvot sociālekonomiskajām atšķirībām starp valstīm un reģioniem, ne visas valstis spēj ieguldīt līdzekļus inovāciju jomā pietiekamā apjomā, jo to prioritāte nav inovācijas, bet akūtu problēmu risināšana. Ir skaidrs, ka inovācijas ir jāattīsta, lai ilgstoši pastāvošās sociālekonomiskās problēmas ilgtermiņā tiktu novērstas. Šobrīd dalībvalstu izpratne par inovāciju nepieciešamību ir atšķirīga, vairākās valstīs tā ir nepietiekama, un ir grūti iegūt to atbalstu inovāciju attīstīšanai. To, vai turpmāk inovāciju attīstība piedzīvos izaugsmi, spēcīgi ietekmēs arī populisma vilnis. Populistu tendence apšaubīt ekspertu viedokļus var sagādāt izaicinājumus pētniecības un inovāciju turpmākajai attīstībai un pat negatīvi ietekmēt valsts sniegto atbalstu inovācijām.[2]

ES pētniecības un inovāciju politikā ir trīs galvenie mērķi: (1) atvērtā inovācija, (2) atvērtā zinātne un (3) atvērtība pasaulei. Pamatprogramma

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[1] Directorate General for Research and Innovation. (2019). *Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU 2018 Key findngs*. European Commission.

[2] Smart, P., Holmes, S., Lettice, F., Pitts, F. H., Zwiegelaar, J. B., Schwartz, G., & Evans, S. (2019). Open Science and Open Innovation in a socio-political context: knowledge production for societal impact in an age of post-truth populism. *R&D Management*, *49*(3), pp. 279-297.

"Apvārsnis 2020" (*Horizon 2020*) ir lielākā pētniecības un inovāciju atbalsta programma, kuru ES izmanto kā finanšu instrumentu, lai īstenotu vienu no stratēģijas "Eiropa 2020" pamatiniciatīvām "Inovācijas savienība", un kuras mērķis ir nodrošināt Eiropas konkurētspējas stiprināšanu pasaules mērogā. Programma ir vērsta uz Eiropas spēju radīt pasaules līmeņa zinātnes sasniegumus, likvidēt barjeras inovāciju ieviešanai un veicināt sadarbību starp privāto un publisko sektoru.[3] Šī programma ir svarīgs instruments Eiropas konkurētspējas saglabāšanai globālajās inovāciju sacensībās. Esošais, šķietami lielais finansējums, ko šī programma paredz pētniecībai, nav pietiekams, lai nodrošinātu ES konkurētspēju globālā līmenī.[4] Tajā pašā laikā šī programma ļauj risināt nozīmīgas problēmas, kas saistītas ar sabiedrībai aktuālām tēmām, proti, enerģijas, transporta, klimata pārmaiņu, veselības, digitalizācijas un cirkulārās ekonomikas[5] jautājumiem.

Inovāciju loma ekonomikas attīstībā

Inovāciju, ekonomikas un konkurētspējas attiecības ir pētītas jau kopš 19. gadsimta. Neoklasiskās skolas izaugsmes modeļa izveidotājs Roberts Solovs (*Robert Solow*) apgalvo, ka ekonomikas izaugsme ilgtermiņā ir kapitāla, darbaspēka un tehnoloģiskā progresa rezultāts industriālajā sfērā. Jozefs Šumpēters (*Joseph Schumpeter*) par inovāciju procesa aizsākumu uzskatīja uzņēmumus. Uzņēmējs (angļu val. – *entrepreneur*) viņa skatījumā ir galvenais inovāciju radīšanas procesa rosinātājs (angļu val. – *protagonist*). Vēlāk viņš savu skatījumu papildināja, paužot, ka pētniecības un inovācijas laboratorijas līdzās lieliem uzņēmumiem ir zināšanu radītājas, un tās sniedz svarīgu ieguldījumu inovācijās.[6]

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[3] European Commission. What is Horizon 2020? (Published on Horizon 2020) Izgūts (20.05.2020.) no: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020

[4] European Committee of the Regions. (01.10.2019). Closing Europe's innovation divide: Horizon Europe funding alone is not enough. (Press release). Izgūts (20.05.2020.) no: https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/closing-europes-innovation-divide-horizon-europe-funding-alone-is-not-enough.aspx

[5] Stahel, W. R. (2016). The circular economy. *Nature*, *531*(7595), 435-438. *Cirkulārā ekonomika jeb aprites ekonomika attiecas uz atkritumu pārstrādāšanu, lai tie kļūtu par izejvielām.*

[6] Cavallini, S., Soldi, R., Friedl, J., & Volpe, M. (2016). Using the quadruple helix approach to accelerate the transfer of research and innovation results to regional growth. *Consortium Progress Consulting Srl & Fondazione FoRmit.*

Šumpētera inovāciju teorijas pamati ir atrodami viņa cirkulārās plūsmas ekonomiskajā modelī. Tā ir plūsma, kas apraksta nekustīgu, nemainīgu līdzsvara situāciju un ideālu konkurētspēju. Modeļa ietvaros visi uzņēmumi atrodas ideālā līdzsvarā, tajā izmaksas ir vienādas ar ienākumiem, cenas ir vienādas ar vidējām izmaksām un tīrā peļņa ir vienāda ar nulli. Cirkulāro plūsmu apraksta kā izrietošu no pastāvīgiem pielāgojumiem mazām ārējām izmaiņām, kuras tiek absorbētas caur uzņēmumu rutīnas uzvedību. Šumpēters apgalvoja, ka kapitālisma ekonomika ir sistēma, kura konstanti ir kustībā un līdz ar to nespēj sasniegt līdzsvaru. Attiecīgi ar inovācijām ekonomikas sistēma tiek novirzīta no esošā līdzsvara. Savukārt, pakāpeniski noārdoties inovāciju sekām, tiek radīts jauns līdzsvars. Šumpēters izveidoja priekšstatu par jaunām kombinācijām, kas attiecināmas uz jaunu produktu ieviešanu, kāda esoša produkta jaunas kvalitātes radīšanu, jaunu ražošanas metodi, jaunu vietu tirgū, jaunu materiālu vai izejvielu piedāvājuma avotu vai jaunu organizāciju kādā no industrijām. Lai gan Šumpēters uz inovācijām atsaucās kā uz šīm definētajām jaunajām kombinācijām, viņš arī atsevišķi inovācijas definē kā produkta jaunas funkcijas radīšanu. Tas ir mulsinoši un parāda, ka inovāciju koncepts ir neskaidrs un sagādā grūtības arī pētniekiem. Ir acīmredzams, ka Šumpētera skaidrojumi ir plaši un izplūduši (angļu val. – *fuzzy*), atspoguļojot viņa centienus saprast tehnoloģiskās attīstības sarežģījumus.[7]

ES, izstrādājot Pētniecības un inovāciju stratēģiju gudras specializācijas jomā, izmanto **četrkāršās spirāles inovāciju modeli** (angļu val. – *Quadruple Helix*). Šajā modelī tiek pieņemts, ka pastāv papildu perspektīvas, kas papildina inovāciju izpratni 21. gadsimtā. Tas ir papildināts **trīskāršās spirāles inovāciju modelis** (angļu val. – *Triple Helix*).[8] Demokrātija maina apstākļus inovāciju radīšanai, tāpēc tiek uzskatīts, ka trīskāršās spirāles modelis vairs neattiecas uz mūsdienu apstākļiem (sk. 1. attēlu), un līdz ar to tas papildināts ar ceturto kategoriju – sabiedrību (sk. 2. attēlu). Tiek polemizēts, ka ar šo atjaunoto modeli iesaistītajām pusēm tiek dota iespēja sekot netradicionāliem inovāciju ceļiem, tādiem, kas nav saistīti ar strikti tehnoloģiskiem

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7   Hagedoorn, J. (1996). Innovation and entrepreneurship: Schumpeter revisited. *Industrial and corporate change*, *5*(3), pp. 883-896.

8   Farinha, L., Ferreira, J. J. (2013). *Triangulation of the triple helix: a conceptual framework. Triple Helix Association*, Working Paper, 1.

uzlabojumiem, bet gan ar pakalpojumu radīšanu un radošuma izmantošanu. Tas ļauj īstenot ES izvirzīto mērķi "atvērtā inovācija", jo inovācijas kļūst par procesu, kurā visas iesaistītās puses kā aktīvi spēlētāji kopīgi radīs un eksperimentēs jaunos veidos. Šī modeļa pieeja liek uzsvaru uz pilsoņu radīto inovāciju, proti, ir uz lietotājiem orientēta pieeja.[9] Šī pieeja saskata to, ka akadēmiskā nozare, sabiedrība, valdība un industrija jeb uzņēmumi (inovāciju modeļa četras kategorijas) nav saistītas vienvirziena attiecībās. Tās ir savstarpēji saistītas vairāku kārtu dinamiskā divvirziena saskarsmē. Sabiedrībai ir liela loma dalībvalstu inovāciju sistēmās, un ir ļoti būtiski integrēt sabiedrību inovācijas projektos.[10]

1. attēls. *Trīskāršās spirāles inovāciju modelis[11]*

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[9] Cavallini, S., Soldi, R., Friedl, J., & Volpe, M. (2016). Using the quadruple helix approach to accelerate the transfer of research and innovation results to regional growth. *Consortium Progress Consulting Srl & Fondazione FoRmit.*

[10] Schütz, F., Heidingsfelder, M. L., & Schraudner, M. (2019). Co-shaping the future in quadruple helix innovation systems: uncovering public preferences toward participatory research and innovation. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, 5(2), pp. 128-146.

[11] Farinha, L., & Ferreira, J. J. (2013). Triangulation of the triple helix: a conceptual framework. *Triple Helix Association, Working Paper*, 1.
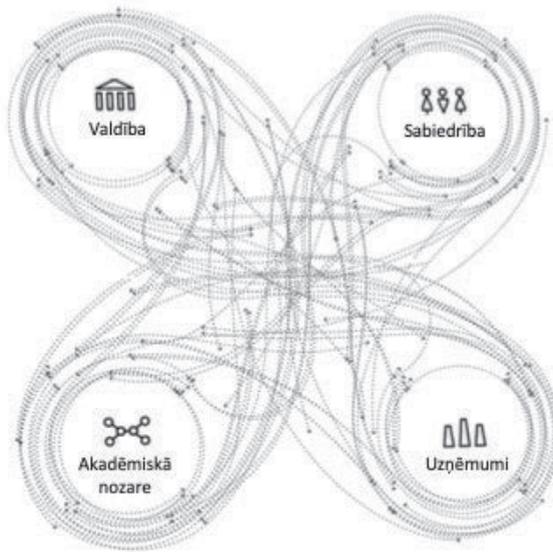
2. attēls. *Četrkāršās spirāles inovāciju modelis[12]*

Izpratne par inovācijām kā nelīdzsvarojošu spēku ir sastopama ne tikai Šumpētera teorijā, tā turpina ietekmēt arī moderno uzņēmumu attīstības analīzi. Jaunu produktu un procesu iepazīstināšana spēlē svarīgu lomu vietējās un starptautiskās konkurences pārveidošanā. Inovācijām ir gan īstermiņa, gan ilgtermiņa ietekme uz patērētājiem, uzņēmumiem un valstīm. Izmaiņas interpretācijā par lielo uzņēmumu lomu atspoguļo to, ko Šumpēters saskatīja kā mērķu izmaiņas, lieliem, uz zinātni balstītiem uzņēmumiem 20. gadsimtā spēlējot daudz svarīgāku lomu, nekā tie spēja agrākos ekonomikas attīstības posmos.[13] Pētniecības un inovāciju literatūrā sadarbība tiek skatīta kā inovāciju procesa stimuls, līdz ar to sadarbība var tikt uzskatīta par stratēģiju inovāciju attīstības problēmu risināšanā. Vēl joprojām ir neskaidrība par pašu inovāciju procesu, tirgu un izmaksu un resursu vadību, ar kuru uzņēmumiem jāsastopas un jāpārvar inovāciju attīstīšanā.

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[12] Schütz, F., Heidingsfelder, M. L., & Schraudner, M. (2019). Co-shaping the future in quadruple helix innovation systems: uncovering public preferences toward participatory research and innovation. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, 5(2), pp. 128-146.

[13] Hagedoorn, J. (1996). Innovation and entrepreneurship: Schumpeter revisited. *Industrial and corporate change*, 5(3), pp. 883-896.

Davide Antonjoli (*Davide Antonioli*) vērš uzmanību uz to, ka ir svarīgi skatīties uz to, kā uzņēmumi uztver inovāciju šķēršļus, lai izprastu lēmumu mainīgumu sadarbības ietvaros. Uzņēmumu izvēle sadarboties vai nesadarboties ar citiem uzņēmumiem ir organizāciju vadītāju perspektīvas atspoguļojums. Vadītāju veiktās izvēles un lēmumi balstās un viņu individuālo pieredzi, motīviem un ietekmes sfērām. Tādēļ ir likumsakarīgi, ka uzņēmējiem un politikas īstenotājiem ir atšķirīgs viedoklis par pastāvošajiem šķēršļiem inovāciju procesā.[14]

Sabiedrības iesaistīšana pētniecībā, attīstībā un inovācijās ir sarežģīts process, tam ir vairāki galvenie izaicinājumi: (1) kā indivīdi var efektīvi ieviest savu sabiedrības perspektīvu; (2) kā akadēmiskā nozare, uzņēmumi un valdība gūs labumu no sabiedrības zināšanām; (3) kā definēt sabiedrības kā ceturtā dalībnieka funkcionālo lomu inovāciju procesā, proti, kāpēc viņiem jābūt iesaistītiem šajā procesā, kāds devums viņiem ir jāsniedz, un kādus mērķus viņi var īstenot, piedaloties inovāciju procesā?[15] Liels vispārējs izaicinājums ir tas, ka tehnoloģijas funkcionalitāte un ietekme nav pilnībā zināma, kamēr tā nav pietiekami attīstīta un plaši izmantota. Savukārt pēc tam, kad tas ir paveikts, ir grūti īstenot izmaiņas. Iesaistītajām pusēm ir pārāk daudz dažādu motīvu un interešu, kas kļūst par lielu šķērsli komunikācijai, kā arī tas var negatīvi ietekmēt savstarpējo saskarsmi starp indivīdiem dažādās grupās.[16]

Sniegums inovācijās – kāds ir globālais un reģionālais konteksts?

Priekšstatu par inovāciju sniegumu var gūt no Eiropas inovāciju indeksa, aplūkojot **reģionālo kontekstu**, proti, to, kā inovāciju sniegumā ES dalībvalstis izskatās savstarpēji (sk. 3. attēlu). Eiropas inovāciju progresa ziņojumā 2019. gadā starp ES dalībvalstīm starptautiski izvirzījusies līdere – Zviedrija, aiz tās hronoloģiski seko Somija, Dānija un Nīderlande. Zīmīgi, ka

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[14] Antonioli, D., Marzucchi, A., & Savona, M. (2017). Pain shared, pain halved? Cooperation as a coping strategy for innovation barriers. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, *42*(4), pp. 841-864.

[15] Schütz, F., Heidingsfelder, M. L., & Schraudner, M. (2019). Co-shaping the future in quadruple helix innovation systems: uncovering public preferences toward participatory research and innovation. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, *5*(2), pp. 128-146.

[16] Turpat.

šo valstu sniegums ir krietni augstāks par ES vidējo. Luksemburga un Apvienotā Karaliste (turpmāk – AK), kad tā vēl atradās ES, izkrita no līderu kategorijas un tika ierindotas kategorijā "stiprās valstis", savukārt Igaunija tikusi ierindota stipro valstu kategorijā.

Ilgākā laika posmā, proti, no 2011. gada, ES inovāciju sniegums ir audzis par 8,8%. Valstis, kuras uzrādījušas visstraujāko pieaugumu, ir Lietuva, Grieķija, Latvija, Malta, AK, Igaunija un Nīderlande. Slovēnija, kura iepriekš bija ierindota stipro valstu kategorijā, ir nokritusi kategorijā "valstis, kas uzrāda mērenus rādītājus inovācijās".[17] Interesants ir fakts, ka ES šajā indeksā visvājāko valstu kategoriju dēvē par valstīm, kas uzrāda pieticīgu inovāciju sniegumu (angļu val. – *modest innovators*), savukārt kopējās drošības un aizsardzības politikā, vērtējot valstu pūles sniegt kādu devumu, vājāko kategorija tiek dēvēta par slaistiem (angļu val. – *slackers*). Tas liek izdarīt secinājumus, ka inovāciju īstenošanā no ES puses nav tik stingra attieksme pret dalībvalstīm.

Visvājāko kategorijā ir ierindotas Rumānija un Bulgārija, savukārt diezgan liels skaits valstu ir mēreno valstu kategorijā (angļu val. – *moderate innovators*), kaut arī vizuāli šķiet, ka vairākas valstis tomēr atrodas ļoti tuvu Rumānijas un Bulgārijas līmenim. Šis vizualizējums vēl vairāk rosina priekšstatu par maigu attieksmi pret tām dalībvalstīm, kuras krietni atpaliek.
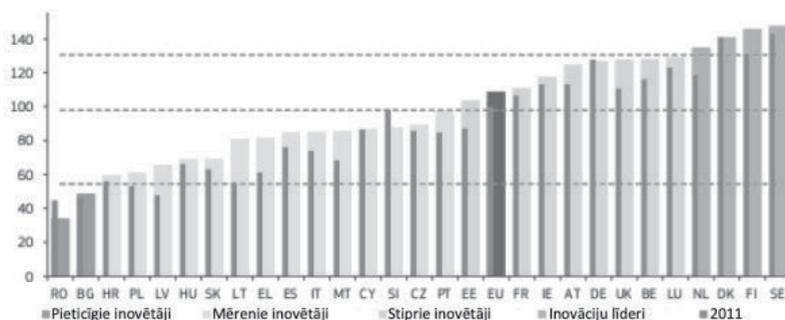
3. attēls. *ES dalībvalstu inovāciju sistēmu sniegums[18]*

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[17] Publications Office of the European Union. (2019). European Innovation Scoreboard 2019. Izgūts (05.05.2020.) no: https://op.europa.eu/s/n8Ri
[18] Turpat.

Aplūkojot ES sniegumu **globālā kontekstā**, redzams, ka ES pirmo reizi apsteidz ASV, lai gan tikai par 1 punktu, un tas nozīmē, ka ar šiem panākumiem vien nepietiek, lai ES būtu apmierināta ar savu sniegumu inovāciju jomā (sk. 4. attēlu). Japāna, Dienvidkoreja, Kanāda un Austrālija atrodas priekšā ES. Lai gan ES ir apsteigusi Ķīnu, Ķīna strauji pietuvojas ES sniegumam, un tās temps ir 2 reizes ātrāks par ES izaugsmes tempu. Iegūta ievērojami labāka pozīcija iepretim Brazīlijai, Indijai, Krievijai un Dienvidāfrikai. ES ir uzlabojusi savu pozīciju iepretim Austrālijai un Kanādai, lai gan šīs valstis atrodas tai priekšā.

Panākumi, kas ievērojami uzlabojuši ES sniegumu, skaidrojami ar labiem cilvēkresursu rādītājiem, un iemesls tam ir jauni doktorantūras studiju beidzēji. Labs sniegums ir novērots indikatorā "pievilcīga pētniecības sistēma", jo pieaudzis starptautisko līdzautoru publikāciju skaits. Uzņēmumu ieguldījumos labs sniegums ir tādēļ, ka tie piedāvā IKT apmācības, veicinot cilvēkkapitāla attīstību. Pozitīvi tiek novērtēti ievērojami pieaugušie riska kapitāla izdevumi. Izaugsmes potenciāls balstās uz pakalpojumu un digitālo jomu, bet ES spēja to izmantot ir atkarīga no tā, vai tā spēs tikt līdzi citām valstīm. Ja ES vēlas būt konkurētspējīga, ieguldījums P&A ir jāpalielina[19], kas, cerams, tiks īstenots daudzgadu budžetā 2021.–2027. gadam, kurā paredzēts palielināt konkurētspējas, inovāciju un pētniecības attīstībai novirzīto finansējuma apjomu.
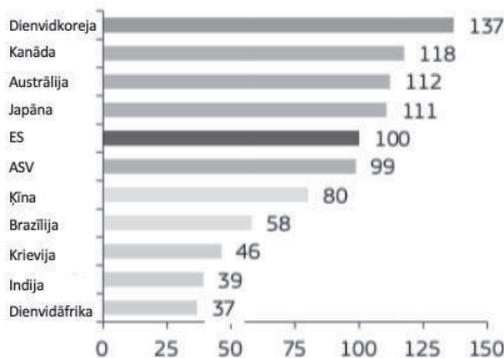
4. attēls. *ES sniegums globāli[20]*

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[19] Gaub, F. (2019). *Global Trends to 2030 Challenges and Choices for Europe*. European Strategy and Policy Analysis System.

[20] Publications Office of the European Union. (2019). European Innovation Scoreboard 2019. Izgūts (05.05.2020.) no: https://op.europa.eu/s/n8Ri

Inovāciju potenciāla kavēkļi

Eiropas Parlamenta sniegtajā pētniecības un inovācijas izvērtējumā sniegts ieskats galvenajos šķēršļos, kas kavējuši programmas "atvērtā inovācija, atvērtā zinātne, atvērtība pasaulei" mērķu sasniegšanu, jo pastāv ļoti sarežģītas procedūras, liels administratīvais slogs, elastīguma trūkums negaidītu apstākļu gadījumā un nepietiekama sinerģija starp ES programmām un fondiem.[21] Mazajām valstīm grūti piekļūt finansējumam ierobežotās kapacitātes un līdzfinansējuma trūkuma dēļ, tādējādi lielākā tā daļa nonāk lielo dalībvalstu rīcībā. Konkursos uzvar valstis, kas demonstrē zinātnisko briedumu, proti, tām piemīt senas pētniecības iestrādes un ilgā laika posmā attīstīta pētniecības infrastruktūra un cilvēkkapitāls.[22] Dalībvalstis ir mazāk aktīvas projekta pieteikumu sagatavošanā, un starp pieteikumiem ir atrodami mazāk veiksmīgi projekti. Ir novērojama pieaugoša tendence, ka lielākā daļa ES pētniecībai paredzēto līdzekļu koncentrējas valstīs ar pieredzi pētniecībā, tādējādi pieaug inovāciju plaisa starp dalībvalstīm. Arī Eiropas Komisija (EK) atzīst, ka pastāv problēmas inovācijām paredzētā finansējuma pieejamībā, turklāt trūkums ir lēna inovāciju pārnese no vadošajiem uzņēmumiem uz reģioniem.[23]

Dalībvalstu atšķirības ieguldījumos inovāciju jomā veicina plaisu ne tikai starp pētniecības potenciālu, bet arī iedzīvotāju dzīves kvalitāti. Bagātākās valstis var atļauties ieguldīt krietni vairāk, savukārt trūcīgākās valstis turpinās atpalikt un būs mazāk efektīvas iekšējo problēmu mazināšanā.[24] Negatīvu iespaidu uz inovāciju jomu atstāj reģionu atšķirības, piemēram, ES-13 valstis[25] atpaliek no ES-15[26] valstīm pieejamo pamatprogrammu iespēju izmantošanā. Problēmas pastāv arī ES-15 valstīs, piemēram, Spānijā

[21] Karakas, C. (2019). *Horizon Europe Framework programme for research and innovation 2021-2027*. European Parliamentary Research Service. Izgūts (15.05.2020.) no: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/search.html?authors=24485

[22] Ozoliņa, Ž., Šteinbuka, I. (2019). *Latvijas Eiropas ceļš*. Rīga: LU apgāds.

[23] European Commission, Current challenges in fostering the European innovation ecosystem. EUR 28796 NE, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, ISBN 978-92-79-73862-3,doi:10.2760/768124, JRC108368.

[24] Heéraud, J. A. (2003). Regional innovation systems and European research policy: Convergence or misunderstanding?. *European Planning Studies*, *11*(1), pp. 41-56.

[25] *Starp ES-13 valstīm ietilpst Bulgārija, Horvātija, Kipra, Čehija, Igaunija, Latvija, Lietuva, Malta, Polija, Rumānija, Slovākija un Slovēnija.*

[26] *Starp ES-15 valstīm ietilpst Austrija, Beļģija, Dānija, Somija, Francija, Vācija, Grieķija, Īrija, Itālija, Luksemburga, Nīderlande, Portugāle, Spānija, Zviedrija un AK.*

tiek novērots, ka valsts uzņēmumiem ir vājš starptautiskais profils un ir maz partnerības ārpus ES.[27]

Teritoriālie jautājumi ir svarīgi nacionālajai attīstībai, ņemot vērā to, ka inovāciju politikai pārsvarā jābūt mērķētai uz vietējo uzņēmumu konkurēt- spēju. Šī tēze likumsakarīgi saskan ar četrkāršās spirāles modeli, respektīvi – jāīsteno uz augšu vērsta pieeja, kur sabiedrībai ir iespēja piedalīties inovā- ciju procesā, savukārt valdībām nacionālā līmenī jānodrošina tāds inovā- ciju pārvaldības mehānisms, kas iekļauj sabiedrību kā līdzvērtīgu partneri. Pētniecības un inovāciju jomā bažas rada valstu pārliekā paļaušanās uz ES struktūrfondu un investīciju fondu resursiem un mazāk pievēršas citām iespējām, kuras meklējamas privātās investīcijās, risku fondos, starptautiskos sadarbības formātos, izcilu pētnieku un pētniecības institūtu atbalstīšanā.

P&A iniciatīvas nav īstenojušas sadarbību starp uzņēmējdarbības sek- toru un universitātēm, nav radījušas pietiekami daudz jaunu produktu un pakalpojumu, kā arī nav panākušas iekļaušanos globālajās vērtību ķēdēs. ES-13 un ES-15 valstu uzņēmumiem ir līdzīga apgrozījumu daļa no inovā- cijām, tomēr ES-13 valstu inovāciju aktivitātes nav saistītas ar P&A.[28] Valstu aktivitātes vietējā līmenī, izmantojot ES sniegtās iespējas pētniecības un ino- vāciju nozarē, nav panākušas vēlamo efektu. Bez programmas "Apvārsnis 2020" ir pieejami arī citi atbalsta veidi, piemēram, Eiropas Reģionālās attīs- tības fonds un Eiropas Sociālais fonds, un tie arī paredz finansiālo atbalstu tādiem mērķiem kā pētniecības infrastruktūra un cilvēkkapitāla veidošana.

ES-13 valstis attīstības ziņā atpaliek no ES-15 valstīm, jo tām pietrūkst starptautisko kontaktu, un šo valstu pieeja profesionālo organizāciju tīkliem ir ierobežota. P&A jomā ES dominē stipru valstu kopa, kura veido noslēgtu grupu, norobežojoties no pārējām valstīm. Starp šīm valstu grupām nav pietiekamas sinerģijas, tādēļ vājākajām valstīm īsti neizdodas piedalīties pētniecības un inovāciju iniciatīvās un projektos. Vēl jāvērš uzmanība uz to, ka ES-13 valstis iepretim tādām ātri augošām lielām ekonomikām kā Ķīna, Indija un Brazīlija zaudē konkurētspējas priekšrocību, balstoties pārsvarā uz

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[27] Fernandez De Arroyabe Fernandez, J. C., Arranz, N., & Fernandez De Arroyabe Arranz, M. (2019). Obstacles of innovation and institutional support in the cooperation agreements: the Span- ish case. *European Journal of Innovation Management*.

[28] Radosevic, S., & Stancova, K. C. (2018). Internationalising smart specialisation: Assessment and issues in the case of EU new member states. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, *9*(1), pp. 263-293.

lēto ražošanu un kvalificēto darbaspēku. ES-13 valstis nespēj starptautiski konkurēt par ārvalstu tiešajiem ieguldījumiem.[29]

EK arī vērš uzmanību uz to, ka palielinājušās starpreģionu un starpnozaru atšķirības inovāciju spējās, kā arī pastāv nepiemērota inovāciju sistēmu pārvaldība.[30] Inovācijas būtu jāsaprot plašākā kontekstā, proti, jāpatur prātā, ka pārvaldības prasmju un organizatorisku metožu uzlabošana un labāka pieeja dažādām vispārējo zināšanu jomām ir tikpat svarīgas kā P&A vai tehnoloģiju pārnese. Nelineārais inovāciju modelis nozīmē, ka zinātnes un vispārējās izglītības līmeņa galvenā loma caurstrāvo visus ķēdes posmus, kas noved pie inovācijām. ES virzīsies cita inovācijas modeļa – četrkāršās spirāles – virzienā. Šī pieeja balstīta idejā, ka inovācija ir interaktīva procesa rezultāts, kas ietver dažādu jomu dalībniekus. Katrs dalībnieks sniedz devumu atkarībā no tā institucionālās funkcijas sabiedrībā.[31]

Līdz šim šajā modelī ir izdevies akadēmiski ierāmēt atvērto zinātni un apzinātu demokrātiju, uz lietotājiem orientētu inovāciju un sadarbošanos ar sabiedrību. Liela problēma ir tā, ka šo diskursu ir izdevies īstenot tikai akadēmiskajā plāksnē, bet ieviešanas mēģinājumi praksē pagaidām ir nenozīmīgi. Joprojām pieticīgi panākumi vērojami sabiedrības iesaistīšanā dialogā par to, kādu tā vēlas redzēt zinātnes pārvaldību. Pastāv pētniecības plaisa attiecībā uz sabiedrības mērķiem un pārējo iesaistīto dalībnieku skatījumu uz inovācijas rezultātu.[32] Lielāka sabiedrības iesaiste pētniecībā un inovācijās par leģitīmām padarīs pētniecības trajektorijas un radīs atvērtākas un ilgtspējīgas inovācijas.

Lielo fondu programmas arvien vairāk projektu priekšlikumus vērtē, ņemot vērā to, cik cieši ir piesaistīti potenciālie lietotāji un citi saistītie indivīdi,

[29] Radosevic, S., & Stancova, K. C. (2018). Internationalising smart specialisation: Assessment and issues in the case of EU new member states. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, *9*(1), pp. 263-293.

[30] European Commission, Current challenges in fostering the European innovation ecosystem. EUR 28796 NE, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, ISBN 978-92-79-73862-3,doi:10.2760/768124, JRC108368.

[31] Cavallini, S., Soldi, R., Friedl, J., & Volpe, M. (2016). Using the quadruple helix approach to accelerate the transfer of research and innovation results to regional growth. *Consortium Progress Consulting Srl & Fondazione FoRmit*.

[32] Schütz, F., Heidingsfelder, M. L., & Schraudner, M. (2019). Co-shaping the future in quadruple helix innovation systems: uncovering public preferences toward participatory research and innovation. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, *5*(2), pp. 128-146.

un cik liela nozīme atvēlēta viņu viedoklim.[33] Tādēļ dalībvalstīm nāksies turpmāk meklēt risinājumus, izmantojot uz lietotājiem orientētu pieeju. EK digitālajā stratēģijā apņēmusies attīstīt digitālos risinājumus, uzmanība tiks koncentrēta uz uzņēmumu un IT pielāgošanu, izdevīguma principu, lietotāju vajadzībām un lietotāju pieredzi. Attīstības procesa centrā tiks liktas inovācijas, datu pārvaldība, datu kopīgošana un aizsardzība. Priekšroka tiek sniegta risinājumu atkārtotai lietošanai, ātrai piegādei un pastāvīgiem uzlabojumiem.[34]

No pārvaldes skatupunkta grūtības saskatāmas tajā, ka mazie un vidējie uzņēmumi ir atturīgi pret sadarbību. Sadarbības līgumi inovācijām iekļauj pienākumu sadali, komunikācijas kanālu radīšanu starp partneriem, kopēju mērķu noteikšanu un katra partnera ieguldījuma novērtēšanu. Tādējādi politikas īstenotājiem ir jādefinē noteikumi un mehānismi, lai piedalītos inovāciju programmās, ņemot vērā uzņēmumu pieredzi un to skatījumu uz šķēršļiem inovāciju īstenošanā. Programmas "Apvārsnis 2020" sekmīgums ir atkarīgs no tā, kā uzņēmumu perspektīva tiks ņemta vērā.[35] Pētniecības un inovāciju stratēģija gudras specializācijas jomā nesaskan ar ES-13 valstu izteikto neatkarību ārvalstu tiešo ieguldījumu jomā un globālajā vērtību ķēdē. Šajās valstīs inovāciju sistēmas pārsvarā ir fragmentētas un balstās uz valsts P&A sistēmām un uz ražošanu orientētiem ārvalstu tiešajiem ieguldījumiem. Šīs problēmas dēļ valstīm nepieciešams atbalsts uz inovāciju orientētiem pasākumiem un globālo vērtību ķēžu un ārvalstu tiešo ieguldījumu integrēšanai vietējās inovāciju sistēmās.[36]

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[33] Schütz, F., Heidingsfelder, M. L., & Schraudner, M. (2019). Co-shaping the future in quadruple helix innovation systems: uncovering public preferences toward participatory research and innovation. *She Ji: The Journal of Design, Economics, and Innovation*, 5(2), pp. 128-146.

[34] European Commission. (2018). Communication to the commission. European Commission digital strategy. A digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission.

[35] Fernandez De Arroyabe Fernandez, J. C., Arranz, N., & Fernandez De Arroyabe Arranz, M. (2019). Obstacles of innovation and institutional support in the cooperation agreements: the Spanish case. *European Journal of Innovation Management*.

[36] Radosevic, S., & Stancova, K. C. (2018). Internationalising smart specialisation: Assessment and issues in the case of EU new member states. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 9(1), pp. 263-293.

Secinājumi

Inovācijas kavējošos šķēršļus ir svarīgi izprast gan no teorētiskās, gan no pārvaldes perspektīvas. Tā nav problēma, par kuru ir jādomā tikai ES, tas ir globāli aktuāls jautājums. Nākotnē ir daudz nezināmā un neparedzamā, līdz ar to daudzus līderus nodarbina jautājums par to, kā veikt uzlabojumus, lai pielāgotos neparedzamiem apstākļiem. Zinātniskajās publikācijās un politiskajos dokumentos redzams, ka ir izveidojusies izpratne par to, kādi izaicinājumi pastāv inovāciju procesos, it īpaši, īstenojot četrkāršās spirāles inovāciju modeli.

Sniegumu inovāciju jomā kavē ilgstošas sociālekonomiskās atšķirības starpvalstu, starpreģionu un starpnozaru līmenī. ES dalībvalstis atrodas dažādos ekonomikas attīstības līmeņos un tādējādi tām ir atšķirīgas iespējas ieguldīt inovāciju jomā. Diemžēl konverģences process nav panācis vienmērīgu attīstību, un daudzas valstis vairs nesaņems ES finansējumu sākotnējā apjomā un tām nāksies pašām subsidēt projektus, kuriem iepriekš tika saņemta ES palīdzība. Tas rada bažas par to, kas notiks ar šīm valstīm, jo pēc konverģences procesa vēl joprojām pastāv dziļas problēmas.

Valstīm ir jāspēj būt neatkarīgām no ES finansējuma dažādās jomās un jārisina iekšējās problēmas, kas ir šķēršļi inovāciju politikas veiksmīgai īstenošanai. Piemēram, valstīm ir jāsaprot sava vieta ES, ņemot vērā to, ka dalībvalsts statuss vien neatrisinās iekšējās problēmas. Iniciatīvām jāiedarbina inovācijas process, iesaistot visus sektorus, dalībniekus un disciplīnas. Inovāciju plaisa jāmazina ar uz augšu virzītiem risinājumiem un eksperimentiem, tādēļ ir tik svarīgi domāt par to, kā iesaistīt lietotājus un citus indivīdus inovāciju procesā.

Inovācijas kavējošs faktors ir tas, ka starp iesaistītajām pusēm ES inovāciju sistēmā pastāv vāja sinerģija, ko izraisa starpnozaru, starpreģionu un starpvalstu savstarpējās neatbilstības, kas nav tikušas atbilstoši risinātas ilgā laika posmā. Tādējādi inovāciju īstenošanas nolūkos ES būs jāatrod risinājumi atšķirību mazināšanai. Starp dalībvalstīm ir vairākas līderes, kuras ir ievērojami virs ES vidējā inovāciju snieguma, un ir gara virkne valstu, kas atpaliek no ES vidējā līmeņa. Vienlaikus jāatzīst, ka inovāciju šķēršļu risināšana ir sarežģīta, un tam būs nepieciešama izmēģinājumu un kļūdu pieeja, jo teorija par inovācijām un P&A nav atradusi visiem piemērojamus norādījumus par to, kā rīkoties, lai likvidētu šķēršļus inovāciju attīstībai.

Youth participation in politics: challenges and solutions for Latvia and Europe

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Representative democracy relies on its citizens' sense of responsibility to carry out their political deliberations in order for it to be truly representative. Such a state where the democratic processes are performed perfectly well without constant supervision does not exist. The ever changing world requires governments to fine tune their actions so that they never lose contact with all the constituencies. EU countries today are finding it difficult to raise interest in politics and encourage turnout among the youngest citizens and that needs special attention to insure a better future.

Keywords: civic activity, education, European Union, Latvia, political parties, voting, youth.

Pārstāvnieciskā demokrātija balstās uz tās pilsoņu vēlmi un atbildību dažādu pienākumu izpildē. Jāatzīst, ka tāda valsts, kurā nebūtu konstanti jāuzrauga un jārūpējas par demokrātisko procesu sekmīgu norisi, nepastāv. Mainīgo pasaules notikumu dēļ valdībām ir nepārtraukti jāpārdomā savas darbības, lai vienmēr uzturētu veselīgu kontaktu ar visiem vēlētājiem. Eiropas Savienības dalībvalstis ir saskārušās ar grūtībām veicināt tieši jauniešu iesaisti politikā, un tas prasa īpašu politiķu uzmanību, lai nodrošinātu labāku nākotni.

Atslēgvārdi: Eiropas Savienība, izglītība, jaunatne, Latvija, pilsoniskā aktivitāte, politiskās partijas, vēlēšanas.

Introduction

In an age when Europe is seeing a new surge of populism, anti-establishment ideas and Euroscepticism even in matured democracies, the EU must respond to these new rising challenges by solving a problem that has

persisted for many years – how to get the youth more engaged with the politics of EU and its respective countries in order to tackle the threat of political illiteracy.

This essay, therefore, tries to look at what are the underlying trends shaping youth participation in politics, what are the lessons incumbent politicians should keep in mind, how well the EU and Latvia have addressed this issue so far, and how the future must be formed in order to ensure a more aware, informed and politically active citizenry. To get a more holistic view of what challenges should be met to achieve the aforementioned goals, the discussion will contain various parts. First, the traditional forms of political participation, like voting and supporting a party, will be analyzed. Second, a separate view on how other forms of informal and organizational participation can be cultivated, devoting special attention to schools. Finally, a conclusion about how all of the fields considered could be combined will be developed. This structure should provide a summary of a broad range of different ways to achieve higher political participation, not focusing only on one of its components.

This topic has gained relevancy in the light of recent discussions regarding lowering the voting age in local, national and even EU parliamentary elections.[1] It needs to be remarked, however, that this paper does not deal with the analysis on this question, seeing that it should rather be treated as a consequence of already healthy and sustainable model for raising political participation among the youth which currently, in many aspects, does not exist.

The discussion will focus on the people at the very earliest stages of their political life – those aged 15 to 24 as defined by the UN.[2] However, when the discussion moves to political parties, the focus should shift towards the age group that is defined to be under 30 years old, given the specifics and the requirements under the status quo of party membership. It is widely held that high turnout among youth today is essential to securing a high overall

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[1] Attīstībai/Par! (2020). *"Attīstībai/Par!" rosina pašvaldību vēlēšanās balsot no 16 gadu vecuma.* Retrieved (20.06.2020.) from: https://www.attistibai.lv/jaunumi/saeima/attistibai-par-rosina-pasvaldibu-velesanas-laut-balsot-no-16-gadu-vecuma-698

[2] The United Nations. *Who are the youth?* Retrieved (29.05.2020.) from: https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/youth-0/index.html

turnout in the future, thus, by focusing at the very youngest, the democratic community of all EU countries could best tackle apathy and lack of interest in politics as a whole.

The most direct form of representation – voting

Voting is the most direct way for a citizen, who is eligible to cast a vote, to affect the way politics is conducted not only within their national boundaries, but also most of continental Europe. When looking at youth participation in politics, the obvious question is whether or not they fulfill the most basic civic duty in a democratic society. By taking a closer look at the data mostly from the last EU parliamentary elections, a further discussion on behaviors and perceptions shaping participation can be fostered.

For the first time since 1994, more than half of Europeans voted in the recent European Parliament elections (50.6%). This increase in the turnout surprisingly came from the youngest generation who turned out by around 14% more than at the previous election. While it is a pleasure hearing that there is some positive momentum, this optimism is soon overshadowed by the fact that a 42% turnout among those aged 18-24 (or in some countries these statistics include 16 and 17 year olds who can vote) is still far off from the EU average and has been for years. The turnout at the EU parliamentary elections seems to correlate with age – the youngest are least likely to vote while those aged 55 and above have the highest turnout of 54% – slightly above the average.[3]

Then the question arises – what are the arguments and reasons, if any, coming from those young voters who decided not to vote? This is of particular importance since these answers could shed light on how to address the most problematic attitudes, which seem to persist in non-voters. The most common answer, as cited by those aged 15-24, was that they were simply "not interested in politics as such". The most worrying response elicited from

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[3] Julien Zalc, Nicolas Becuwe, Alexandrina Buruian (2019). The 2019 post-electoral survey: Have European Elections Entered a New Dimension? *Eurobarometer survey commissioned by the European Parliament Directorate-General for Communication Public Opinion Monitoring Unit*, September 2019. Retrieved (05.06.2020.) from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2019/post-election-survey-2019-complete-results/report/en-post-election-survey-2019-report.pdf

Latvians was that "voting has no consequences or does not change anything" (24% of all of those who did not vote, including all respondents from Latvia, not a particular age group).[4] So one can see two evils manifesting themselves in these answers: one is that of ignorance and apathy towards politics, the other – lack of trust in democratic institutions. While the two might seem as distinct problems at first, they are eventually more closely related than expected. The former and the latter are both a product of lack of exposure to and education about politics from an early age. It does not take much imagination to conclude that a person who was never taught how the basic structures of political decision-making work or whose family did not encourage them to see voting days as events involving certain festivity while they were young, is more likely to ignore or even resent the political apparatus as such. Thus, in order to correct the flaws persisting in the perception of the whole population one has to start addressing the root of the problem – leveling the playing field for all young individuals, so that they receive equal encouragement to vote. This will be analyzed in more detail later, however, these answers in the Eurobarometer survey tell us that voting is a habit – one which is formed quite early. Hence, a kind of a domino effect follows as generations change, if particular attention is devoted to youth. Some might call it a long-term investment in our democracy.

The reason why this has sometimes been reluctantly addressed by politicians is because of what might be called a "chicken and an egg problem". The ageing population of the EU (the median age in the EU-28 increased by 2.7 years between 2008 and 2018)[4] and the youth becoming a smaller portion of society create a lack of incentive for politicians to address it separately since it is not that big of a stakeholder compared to other constituencies. Moreover, if a relatively smaller percentage of the youth votes, there are even fewer reasons to do so, leading to further disillusionment about the youth's interests. And so the vicious cycle continues.

Furthermore, one might say that a 'generational shift' is taking place from 'materialist' to 'post-materialist' values that influence political preferences and interests.[5] This generally means that young people tend to be more

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[4] European Commission (2018). The 2018 Ageing Report; *Economic & Budgetary Projections for the 28 EU Member States, Institutional Paper 079*, May 2018. Retrieved (07.06.2020.) from: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/ip079_en.pdf

[5] Ronald Inglehart (1990). *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

focused on 'quality of life' issues such as environmental protection or human rights.[6] There is, therefore, the danger of some more progressive ideas, that the world objectively needs, going unaddressed (see Figure 1).

Q What are the issues which made you vote in the recent European Parliament elections? Firstly? And then? (% - EU)

	Economy and growth	Combating climate change and protecting the environment	Promoting human rights and democracy	The way the EU should be working in the future	Immigration	Social protection of EU citizens	Fight against terrorism
EU28	44	37	37	36	34	29	26
Gender							
Man	47	36	34	38	33	29	26
Woman	41	39	39	34	35	29	27
Age							
15-24	46	45	44	34	29	29	21
25-39	43	41	41	42	35	27	22
40-54	46	37	35	37	34	30	27
50 +	43	34	34	32	34	29	29

Figure 1. What are the issues which made you vote in the recent European Parliament elections? Firstly? And then? (%-EU) Source: The 2019 post-electoral survey: Have European Elections Entered a New Dimension? Eurobarometer survey commissioned by the European Parliament Directorate-General for Communication Public Opinion Monitoring Unit, September 2019.

Since youth participation in politics is crucial to building a more civically active and outspoken society in the future where inactivity sometimes exists today, it is important to recognize two distinct ideas which could aid these problems. One is that of raising the levels of participation through traditional political structures, such as political parties, the other – encouraging forms of organizational participation which potentially involve the same skills and abilities required in political decision-making.

Political parties and the youth

Declining membership in political parties is an overall trend in the EU. On average only around 4.7 per cent of the national electorates are members of a political party today. In countries such as Latvia and Poland the level of membership does not even reach 1 per cent. The absolute number of

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[6] Anita Harris (2009). *Young People's Politics and Citizenship*. London: Routledge.

members is estimated to have almost halved since 1980.[7] This is particularly true for younger persons.[8] That makes it harder for parties to recruit new leaders and insure a steady change in leadership. Overall, the net result is that young people are largely absent from the traditional institutions of representative democracy and, thus, have less interest in casting their vote in an election.

A reason that could incentivize the youth to be more active during elections is showing that a part of their generation can have a say since it is rare to see a national parliament with more than 2% of its members below the age of 30.[9] The European Parliament is perhaps a good example as the average age of an MEP is 49.5, down from 53 five years ago. The youngest MEP is a 21-year-old from Denmark, who is the youngest person ever to sit in the European Parliament.[10] Similarly, in Latvia the average age is 47,3 years and the youngest person to sit in Saeima is 26.[11] Seeing more members of parliament under thirty could be a sign that they too can rise through the ranks and be heard. That is also a way of alleviating mistrust and lack of interest in the discipline as such. However, that is only the tip of an iceberg since what matters most in participation is not how many sitting parliamentarians there are at the moment, but the fact that there is a tendency of over-representation of older members of society in all party structures (see Figure 2). They are also disproportionately male. [12]

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[7] Ingrid Van Biezen, Peter Mair, Thomas Poguntke (2011). *Going, going, … gone? The decline of party membership in contemporary Europe*, May 2011. Retrieved (03.06.2020.) from: https://ejpr.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2011.01995.x

[8] Cross, W., and Young, L. (2008) *Factors Influencing the Decision of the Young Politically Engaged to Join a Political Party, Party Politics*. 14(3): 345–369

[9] J. Tremmel, A. Mason, I. Dimitrijovski, P.H. Godli (2015). *Introduction: Youth Quotas – Mapping the Field. Youth Quotas and other Efficient Forms of Youth participation in Ageing Societies*, pp. 1-7.

[10] European Parliament (09.07.2019.). *Facts and figures: the European Parliament's new term*. Retrieved (15.06.2020.) from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20190705STO56305/facts-and-figures-the-european-parliament-s-new-term

[11] Centrālā Vēlēšanu Komisija (2019). Elected Candidates. Retrieved (11.06.2020.) from: https://sv2018.cvk.lv/pub/ElectedCandidates

[12] M. Bruter, S. Harrison (2009). *The Future of Our Democracies. Young Party Members in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

The over-representation of the elderly in the population of party members

Country	Members % > 60	Population % > 60	Difference	Difference in 1990 (Widfeldt)
Austria	21	16	5*	–
Belgium	33	21	12*	-1
Denmark	40	23	17*	9
Finland	47	25	22*	3
France	**35**	**23**	**12***	**3**
Germany	**58**	**33**	**25***	**0**
Great Britain	**61**	**24**	**37***	**5**
Greece	28	29	-1*	-7
Ireland	38	21	17*	-3
Italy	29	23	6*	-1
Luxembourg	31	15	16*	1
Netherlands	33	21	12*	14
Norway	**33**	**20**	**13***	**10**
Portugal	26	27	-1	-4
Spain	**16**	**24**	**-8**	**-5**
Sweden	41	24	17*	9
Switzerland	37	21	16*	–
Czech Republic	40	23	17*	–
Hungary	**32**	**25**	**7***	**–**
Poland	13	19	-6*	–
Slovenia	31	23	8*	–

*: $p < 0.05$.
Note: Countries in bold are the six countries included in the analysis for this book.
Source: Scarrow and Gezgor (2006), incluing reference to Widfeldt (1995).

Figure 2. The over-representation of the elderly in the population of party members. Source: M. Bruter, S. Harrison (2009). The Future of Our Democracies. Young Party Members in Europe. Palgrave Macmillan.

Parties have adapted several ways of organizing their hierarchy ranging from more informal structures to highly sophisticated and regimented ones. Most parties in parliamentary democracies in the EU adhere to the latter model, where party membership is more tightly controlled. It includes ideological tests and restrictions on who actually joins and receives a ballot. On the other hand, some parties, such as the French National Front have applied a slightly different model where the bulk of supporters are "fans", which simply share the passion for their ideology and political stance like in any other club. This, consequently, means that they are not granted much de facto

control over the party leadership, however, there are no strict controls, but rather an emphasis on drawing more support for their cause.[13]

In Latvia, as in many other countries of the EU, it seems that many political organizations have relinquished any pretensions to calling themselves mass parties. A very small portion of the population get to influence the party platforms before they are put up to a vote in the first place. Thus, it can be seen that the estranged feeling from party politics is not only a youth problem, although when youth branches of parties are considered, there is still less that young people can do. In many parties across the EU, including in Latvia, they work as facades only in order to tick the box of having such a branch at all. There are no regular meetings regimented or direct ways of promoting youth leaders and their interests. What can mostly be seen in Latvia is that before an election there are a couple of volunteers handing out pens and booklets even though parties are shifting away from that as well, by becoming more reliant on full-time staff and campaign-specific marketing agencies. By searching party websites, including "ZZS"[14], "Jaunā Vienotība"[15], one cannot find specific information about how to get involved in a youth organization and how it is organized in the first place. Although "Saskaņa"[16] and "Jaunā Konservatīvā Partija"[17] seem to have fulfilled at least this requirement, by taking a closer look it becomes evident that the events organized by their youth organization are rare and no real systematic form of representation exists. "Nacionālā Apvienība"[18] organizes yearly summer camps and other events and allows members of its youth branch post articles on its webpage. What is most important, however, is that there seems to be very little literature on the topic of youth participation considering Latvian parties. This hinders parties themselves from better understanding what the current problems and potential solutions are.

There are several ways for improving the overall situation. First, countries should revise the rules governing the formation of parties as such. This

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[13] Susan E. Scarrow (2017). *The Changing Nature of Political Party Membership*. Oxford Research Encyclopedias, January 2017. Retrieved (29.05.2020.) from: https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-226?__prclt=L9ot4jSO

[14] Retrieved (06.07.2020.) from: http://www.zzs.lv/sakums

[15] Retrieved (06.07.2020.) from: https://jaunavienotiba.lv/

[16] Retrieved (04.07.2020.) from: https://saskana.eu/jauniesu-kustiba-restart-lv/

[17] Retrieved (05.07.2020.) from: https://konservativie.lv/konservativa-jaunatne/

[18] Retrieved (05.07.2020.) from: https://www.nacionalaapvieniba.lv/jauniesi/

could take the form of allowing several tiers of participation, like registering as a member online and receiving a ballot straight away by just paying a symbolic sum every year. Voters should also be able to choose between a supporter and member status allowing for more fluid associations with a particular political force depending on one's willingness to donate their time and resources for the party's cause. Second, concerning the youth, there should be clearer structures which outline how exactly one can receive a ballot and vote, for example, on the party program and their candidates. Moreover, a party should designate a specific number of seats for their youth representatives or ambassadors who could voice their concerns in a meeting with the party leaders that have arisen within the youth branch. Third, more of public funds could be directed to those parties which attract more regular members or supporters. The funding could also be conditional on the regularity and geographical representation of various branches of the party, also mandating the minimum number of town hall meetings and public debates on important policy proposals. That could strengthen the internal democracy of parties and make a career in traditional political structures more comprehensible and transparent, essentially getting rid of superstitions and speculations regarding the work of democratic institutions. By delegating responsibilities regarding voluntary work, giving more summer internships for students and asking for the opinions of youth party members, interest in these organizations will grow alongside their prestige.[19]

All parties would be only doing themselves a favor since they could claim more support and legitimacy. That can prove a great advantage over their competitors who have lower turnouts at their party meetings, leading to a more appealing public image. CDU in Germany is one such example. In 2018, the CDU had 420 240 members across numerous constituencies, letting them rightfully claim to be the "party of the people."[20] Nevertheless, even if individual parties may not gain lasting advantages from this shift, their moves to more inclusive decision-making procedures could boost citizens' regard for their country's democratic processes.[14] Some youth-specific lessons can also

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[19] Iveta Kažoka, Providus (2017). *Politiskās partijas 21. gadsimtā: domnīcas Providus organizētā foruma ideju apkopojums*, January 2017. Retrieved (12.06.2020.) from: http://providus.lv/article_files/3283/original/Partijas21apkopojumsProvidus.pdf?1483956590

[20] Christian Democratic Union of Germany. Retrieved (18.06.2020.) from: https://www.cdu.de/artikel/aufbau-der-cdu

be inferred from populist parties in various EU countries which, by adapting new methods of organization, have attracted their support.

Populist parties – lessons for attracting the youth vote

We are witnessing the emergence of alternative forms of organization already employed by many populist parties which have been more adept than their counterparts, such as Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement, which relies heavily on local meet-ups and social media, and aims for a fresh format of horizontal organization to enable the democratic participation of citizens. Other parties, such as Geert Wilders' Freedom Party in the Netherlands even have gotten rid of membership completely and are much more focused instead on reaching the general public through professional and modern marketing campaigns.[21] Some have made internet-based forums both their organizational backbone and their organizational message, such as the Pirate Party in Germany and the 5-Star Movement in Italy.[13]

It seems to be working as there is an upward trend in support among the youth for these parties. In Italy, 17% of voters aged 18 to 34 voted for the League party in 2018, compared to just 5% in 2013. In Austria, 30% of the youngest voters chose the Freedom Party in 2017, up from 22% in 2013, making it the most popular party among those aged 16 to 29. And in Germany, the AfD's gains were notable while support from the youngest voters for the Green Party barely changed.[22] One of the reasons for this trend could be the need to fill the vacuum which parties with more horizontal structures of organization have aptly used. In other words, they have been more responsive than others to the growing sentiment of alienation from the current political elite. They have essentially tried to appeal to younger voters by offering at least the illusion of a more direct democracy which coincides with the general anti-elitism agenda that doubts the quality and effectiveness of representative institutions. To put it simply, neglect and lack of incentive

[21] Ingrid van Biezen (2013). *The decline in party membership across Europe means that political parties need to reconsider how they engage with the electorate*. Retrieved (27.05.2020.) from: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2013/05/06/decline-in-party-membership-europe-ingrid-van-biezen/

[22] Lori Hinnant (2019). *Europe's far-right parties hunt down the youth vote*, May 16, 2019. Retrieved (08.06.2020.) from: https://apnews.com/7f177b0cf15b4e87a53fe4382d6884ca

to address certain portions of the electorate can soon lead to growing discontent, which more often than not manifests itself as a protest vote for the ones who are at least portraying themselves as a "mass party" and not as an enclave of political ideology only protecting a limited set of interests.

One of the ways to address this is by rallying up support by introducing some young and able politicians as well as being even more active on social media, given that it is where the youth most often share their views and receive information about politics. Several populist parties have paid heed to promoting some representatives that speak for the youth both nationally and in the EU. In Spain, the chief spokesman for the Vox party is 28 and was elected to parliament last year. In France, the head of the far-right National Rally slate for the European Parliament elections was just 23 and had been a card-carrying party member since the age of 16. Marine Le Pen's party has made important inroads among young French voters, easily outstripping all the traditional parties in polling among the young as well as the far-left candidate. In Belgium, the telegenic Dries Van Langenhove, who was among the top picks on the list for the far-right party Vlaams Belang last year, is 27.[17] Of course, one should not put as many young people on their candidate lists for being mere figureheads, yet traditional parties with strongly vertical structures definitely need to reconsider how they are going to attract the youth vote with charismatic and powerful youth representatives. Otherwise, evidence shows, someone else will.

Rethinking youth political participation in the 21st century

While so far I have argued for improving the work of parties by making them more accessible to the youth and voters of all ages, there is, perhaps, an irreversible trend which makes us broaden the definition of political participation that includes not only interactions with mainstream electoral politics but also a vast array of other organizational forms of participation. These include work in NGOs, volunteering, self-learning, discussing issues of local and national significance, participating in student councils, signing petitions, contacting politicians, voicing one's concerns on social media, protesting etc. It seems that lately these have been forms of participation which are more appealing to the youth for several reasons.

First, being a member of a political party at the moment involves too many rules and strings attached for a person who is still in their late teens or early 20s and recalibrating their political compass. Second, recent studies have shown that modes of political engagement are linked to shifting perceptions of citizenship, meaning that the patterns of socialization of today's youth are quite different as they have been greatly affected by the processes of globalization and individualization, which no longer put that much emphasis on communitarian ideas. Third, people have increasingly become able to determine their status and place in the social hierarchy, because of socioeconomic integration and ever melting class structures, which no longer define or have such a tight grip on one's political orientation. In other words, while it had a significant impact on a young person where their parents came from some years ago, now the idea of belonging to a particular part of society does not seem to stick. However, that is exactly what often motivates people to join parties – they feel certain loyalty towards segments of society and class, which most often correlate with their political stance.[23] Fourth, reliance on parties as commentators on certain political and social phenomena is in decline since they are no longer information gate-keepers.[14] In a dynamic social media environment young people are no longer looking for authority figures from traditional democratic institutions to confirm or disapprove of certain events and reporting. There has been a decentralization of political commentary which has produced limitless possibilities to search for opinions on political matters elsewhere.

This has produced a generation which sees voting and party membership as just one among many ways to be politically and civically engaged. They are showing their support for various causes in issue-specific and reactionary ways. This has even made them be branded as "stand-by citizens" since they seem to have preference for non-institutionalized, horizontal forms of organization which is characterized by intermittent activity, as opposed to keeping up with everything that is taking place on the political arena. The youth is quick to mobilize when certain problems resurface, as we have, for example, seen during the "Arab Spring" in the Middle East, Occupy movement which set out in the US and the "Fridays For Future" climate activism

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[23] Bauman, Z., 2009. Identity in the Globalizing World. In: A. Elliott and P. du Gay, eds. *Identity in Question*. London: Sage, pp. 1-12.

which also took over Europe last year. This provides conflicting evidence and clashing arguments about the extent to which the youth is interested in politics at the moment. Some studies conclude that the youngest generations are, surprisingly, often the ones who care the most, given that they show more intense support for certain causes.[24] Hence, the more overt forms of protest (displaying a badge or sticker, taking part in a demonstration) are dominated by the young.[25]

Clearly, politicians and decision-makers need to think about how to translate all these other forms of activism into a steadier, permanent long-term engagement. One response to this is definitely redefining themselves in terms of not trying to restrict the political identity they accept from early on. The youth branches in parties should be rebranded as organizations primarily seeking to raise civic activity, education and awareness, putting strict political affiliation second. Throwing in support behind some specific issues, like climate activism, race issues and equal rights for citizens by, for example, helping in organizing demonstrations regarding these issues is a start. In that way the youth would begin seeing parties as ascending above partisanship and being caught up in quarrels only inside the parliament building.

Countries have to respond to the aforementioned trend in globalization and growing attention from the youth to problems of global significance. Evidence shows that the biggest difference between the youngest (15-24) and the oldest (55+) age groups in the perception of the effectiveness of voting is seen at the European level - 63% vs. 51%.[26] This clearly indicates that the youth perceives global events as significant in their national context disproportionately more than older generations.

Here it should be pointed out that the role of international organizations like the EU become most significant. A good example is the UN youth

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[24] Harris, A., Wyn, J. and Younes, S., 2010. Beyond apathetic or activist youth. Young, 18(1), pp. 9-32.

[25] James Sloam (2013). Young people are less likely to vote than older citizens, but they are also more diverse in how they choose to participate in politics, July 19th, 2013. Retrieved (07.06.2020.) from: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2013/07/19/young-people-are-less-likely-to-vote-than-older-citizens-but-they-are-also-more-diverse-in-how-they-choose-to-participate-in-politics/

[26] European Commission. Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2013). Political Participation and EU Citizenship: Perceptions and Behaviours of Young People; Evidence from Eurobarometer surveys. Retrieved (03.06.2020.) from: https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/policy/documents/perception-behaviours_en.pdf

delegate program recently rolled out in Latvia and both of our Baltic neighbors (perhaps EU should think of a similar program). Projects like the European Youth Parliament and Euroscola show that it is possible to raise awareness about the work of EU institutions through a widespread network of youth organizations. However, given that these already attract those who are quite interested in the discipline in the first place, it should be thought about how to expand the levels of participation in these projects too. Additionally, many of these youth projects lack the academic challenge for those who seek it.

Schools – the earlier the better

While, of course, the EU and the UN can do much to help bring young students' attention to politics, most of the weight falls onto the shoulders of national and local governments. Thus, it can easily be seen which countries have been more successful in assessing youth political participation and which not. It turns out that the success largely depends on how early and how well interest in politics is cultivated in school curriculums and extra-curricular activities readily available to students at high-school. Schools also serve as the levelling ground where students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds can receive the same education on political matters, since other outside activities often require more funds and spare time. Several lessons can be learnt from the Nordic countries which see the importance of exposing students to democratic culture and civic responsibility from early on. This includes organizing mock elections, simulations of democratic processes, debates and discussions. Unfortunately, so far in many countries this is a contentious issue due to the belief that schools should be a strictly apolitical environment. This confuses the idea of schools being partisan, even though it is not the same as being political.[27] Swedish studies show that youth who get the chance to discuss politics at school to a larger degree begin to take interest in politics than others.[24]

Studies from Norway show that students who are old enough to vote and that participate in the mock elections are far more willing to participate

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[27] Steve Drummond (2015). Politics In The Classroom: How Much Is Too Much? *National Public Radio*, August 6 2015. Retrieved (19.06.2020.) from: https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/08/06/415498760/the-role-of-politics-in-the-classroom?t=1592572738989

in the real elections afterwards. This effect persists even after having controlled for other background factors that also have an influence, such as parents' educational level. Mock elections in Iceland lead to similar conclusions. Such elections promote the norm of participating in elections in general, and by doing so have a positive effect on youth's voting habit. Other forms of simulation also work – close to the national elections and the European parliamentary elections of 2014, role plays developed by Sweden's student councils were used as a method to teach youth about democracy and to increase their interest in elections. The role plays were very popular, were carried out in a lot of Swedish schools, and received positive feedback.[28]

While student councils are a good starting place where first notions of organizational membership can prosper, they still vary a great deal from place to place. Some are coordinated by stern teachers, supervising every move and leaving very little wiggle room for novel ideas to be implemented in practice, while others are not that representative – they consist of a very small clique of leading members which often delegate responsibilities to their friends and accomplices. Moreover, their tasks do not necessarily involve raising questions regarding political participation, so they should be encouraged to do so. European Parliament Ambassador School Program[29], in which several schools from Latvia have also participated in, seems to be a good starting place. Yet, there is much room for improvement. Besides raising awareness about the existence of the EU and its benefits as such, similar programs should aim to encourage discussion on what the EU should look like in the future and implement more academic rigour.

Conclusion

The key takeaways involve several thoughts: the need to keep up with the broadening definition of political participation, a necessity to foster more support for political forces and make them more available for the youth and, finally, not being afraid of putting serious political issues on the

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[28] Nordic Council of Ministers (2017). *Youth, democracy, and democratic exclusion in the Nordic countries.* Retrieved (03.06.2020.) from: https://www.lnu.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/youth-democracy-and-democratic-exclusion-in-the-nordic-countries.pdf

[29] EU Ambassador School Program. Retrieved (03.07.2020.) from: http://www.ambassadorschool.eu/author/epas1/#

table at schools, thus, finally offering a real academic challenge. Moreover, the society should not see politics only as a discipline that exists parallel to everyday life, because it does not. It is a way of living, a habit which has to be learnt as early as possible.

From the discussion above it can easily be seen that long-term solutions and paradigms have been touched upon leaving little for the reader to focus on the short-term. Nevertheless, the more is talked about the changing reality, the greater the probability that we will finally see an uptick in not only voting, but in all forms of activity which constitute to a democratic society.

European Citizens' Initiative as a solution to the democracy deficit in the European Union

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The European Union's policies and its formation appear to be incomprehensible, overly bureaucratic and remote for a large part of its population, thus making it unpersonal and undermining public support for the EU as a union of states. Many inclusive measures and initiatives are being taken to bring the EU closer to its citizens. The European Citizens' Initiative is the European Union's democracy instrument, designed to ensure greater public involvement in EU policy making. Nine years have passed since the introduction of the regulation. Up to now, 74 initiatives have been registered, but only five of them have been successful. Does the citizens' initiative justify the expectations of itself and reduce the democratic deficit in the EU?

Keywords: citizenship, democracy, democracy deficit, European Citizens' initiative, European Union, regulation.

Lielai daļai Eiropas Savienības iedzīvotāju tās politika un politikas veidošana šķiet neizprotama, pārāk birokrātiska un attālināta, kas padara ES bezpersoniskāku un grauj sabiedrības atbalstu ES kā valstu savienībai. Lai tuvinātu ES tās pilsoņiem, tiek īstenoti vairāki iekļaujošie pasākumi un iniciatīvas. Eiropas pilsoņu iniciatīva ir Eiropas Savienības demokrātijas instruments, kas tika izveidota, lai nodrošinātu lielāku sabiedrības līdzdalību ES politikas veidošanā. Kopš regulas ieviešanas ir pagājuši deviņi gadi; līdz šim tikušas reģistrētas 74 iniciatīvas, bet tikai piecas no tām ir bijušas veiksmīgas. Vai pilsoņu iniciatīva attaisno uz to liktās cerības un samazina demokrātijas deficītu?

Atslēgvārdi: demokrātija, demokrātijas deficīts, Eiropas Pilsoņu iniciatīva, Eiropas Savienība, pilsonība, regula.

The debate about democracy deficit in the European Union (EU) is not new. Even though the EU was established based on Western values – democracy being one of the main ones – in the middle of all the EU institutions and procedures it might seem lost. In recent years, it has been widely pointed out that the EU lacks links with its citizens, insufficiently involving them in policy-making processes. This weakens the EU's legitimacy, as participation of citizens is an important cornerstone. The EU has sought opportunities to involve citizens more and recognize the importance of dialogue between citizens and the EU institutions.[1] The European Citizen's initiative (ECI) is one of the many EU's attempts to reach out to citizens and involve them more in the decision making process. This essay will discuss the democracy deficit in the EU, how ECI is used to reduce the democracy deficit by close the gap between EU's citizens and policymaking, and what are the biggest obstacles that ECI has faced so far.

Democracy in the European Union

The Maastricht Treaty known as the Treaty on European Union in 1993 introduced the European Union as the world knows it today – economic and political union, at that time adding political elements, such as citizenship and common foreign policy.[2] Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union states that the Union is based on "values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights"[3], thereby emphasising the fundamental rights of society and stating that it is in the EU's interest to strengthen the freedom and democratic values of its citizens. Article 9 TEU and Article 20 TFEU state that an EU citizen is a national of any EU Member State. EU citizenship is a supplement to existing national citizenship, thus, primarily it is based on the rights and obligations of citizens established by the State. This is a unique case – European citizenship emphasises the political sovereignty of each country, at the same

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[1] EUR-Lex. *Democratic deficit.* Retrieved (18.06.2020) form: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/democratic_deficit.html

[2] European Union. (2019). *EU treaties.* Retrieved (17.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/european-union/law/treaties_en

[3] *Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union.* Available at: http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teu_2012/oj

time creating a civil society at international level. European citizenship complements existing national citizenship and extends the political space and solidarity to European level by creating political link between EU citizens. It guarantees numerous rights and opportunities, as the protection of fundamental rights and the free movement of persons between EU countries.[4]

The EU itself describes democracy deficit as a "term that is used by people who argue that the EU institutions and their decision-making procedures suffer from a lack of democracy and seem inaccessible to the ordinary citizen due to their complexity."[5] In other words, euroscepticsm and people who have started to doubt the EU support an opinion that EU institutions lack transparency. From many citizens point of view the EU is seen as a distant and complicated institution that is taking the responsibility over many competences that citizens would like to keep at a local level. The EU itself describes the real democracy deficit as the absence of European politics. They are mostly highlighting the poor level of citizen's involvement – the lack of possibilities to directly influence and change the course of EU policies and politics, as well as the issue that citizens feel left outside of important decisions and are dispossessed the chance to reject "government" if they are not satisfied with it.[6] Nevertheless, the EU is an international organisation not a state. The root meaning of the democracy is the power of the people; however, the EU as an organisation primarily unites countries. Therefore, the EU in the first place is responsible for ensuring that the countries can practice democracy in the EU, and this is not a problem in the EU itself – the head of the government of each member state represents each countries position in European Council where most of the decisions have to be decided by consensus; the Council of the EU gathers government ministers from each country according to the policy are that is being discussed. The EU political system might seem confusing to many of the EU citizens, since it does not completely mirror the usual system of a democratic state, therefore people do not see it as legitimate as, for example, government of their country. Actually, the EU does not even have such government that could take all the responsibility

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[4] Eiropas Parlaments. (2020.) *Savienības pilsoņi un viņu tiesības.* Retrieved (18.06.2020) from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/lv/sheet/145/savienibas-pilsoni-un-vinu-tiesibas

[5] EUR-Lex. *Democratic deficit.* Retrieved (18.06.2020) form: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/democratic_deficit.html

[6] *Ibid.*

as it is in sovereign states. People fear what they do not understand, thus EU is at a big risk of *scaring away* citizens who feel that EU threatens them and their rights that they are used to have. It is important to keep in mind that most of these worries are just based on citizens' feelings, as only one fourth of the decisions that matter to the states are made in the EP. That is why the EU has to find ways to make citizens feel more included in policymaking process. Citizens' remoteness from the institutions and the absence of feeling of direct affiliation with the EU can be observed while looking at the data of citizens' activity in the European Parliament elections. In 2014 total results reached the lowest ever – the EU average was 42.61%, the activity in Slovakia and Czechia did not reach even 20%. On the positive side, elections in 2019 showed better results as the EU average rose up to 50.66% and most of the countries demonstrated growth, however the outcome still is far behind the activity in the 20th century.[7]

The European Union's democratisation researcher and Professor Alberto Alemanno believes that the biggest problem is detachment between the EU's representative and participatory democracy sectors, calling for more inter-connections and greater importance for citizens' involvement, particularly for citizens' initiatives in the representation sectors. Considering the issue from this point of view, EU democracy could only develop successfully if each democratic channel – representative and participatory – would be per-ceived as equally important, and a supplement to each other.[8] ECI is one of instruments the EU can use to address both the issue of democracy deficit and detachment between representative and participatory democracy sectors.

European Citizens' Initiative in action

The citizens' initiative is an essential instrument for the participation of a democratic society, used both at regional and national level. The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is a unique democratic instrument in an interna-tional organisation. At the EU level, the ECI is equal to the right of the EU Parliament and the Council in being able to present an initiative of a new

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[7] European Parliament. (2019). *Turnout by Year.* Retrieved (18.06.2020) from: https://euro-parl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/

[8] Alemanno, A. (2020). Europe's Democracy Challenge: Citizen Participation in and Beyond Elections. *German Law Journal,* 21(1), 38. Retrieved (15.06.2020) from: doi:10.1017/glj.2019.92

legislation to the Commission. The European Citizen Initiative (ECI) was introduced in 2011 after long debates, however it was applied only a year later as Member States needed to make adjustments in order to comply with the relevant Regulation.[9] To launch an ECI, citizens from at least seven different EU countries must form a committee, and consequently become its organizers. An initiative can be considered successful if at least one million EU citizens sign it or in ECI case give their statements of support. However, these million citizens must come from at least seven EU countries that reach above the minimum number of signatories from each EU country (the benchmark is calculated multiplying 750 and the number of seats from each country); the organisers of the initiative should start collecting statements of support within six months of the registration of the initiative. The collection of signatures takes place over 12 months, both in paper form and electronically.[10]

Following the first report on the regulation in 2015, it became clear that the procedure for submitting an initiative should be simplified. In September 2017, the Commission issued a proposal recommending a review of the ECI identifying three main challenges. First, difficulties for organisers in the process of registration of the initiative, including a high number of refusals of the proposed initiatives. Second, the complexity of collecting the required 1 000 000 support statements set for successful initiative within the deadlines. Third, the small resonance of the ECI in society and the small number of successful initiatives. Until the 2017, only three initiatives had gone through the whole process and received a response form the Commission. In order to address these challenges, the EC issued recommendations; the new European Citizens' Initiative Regulation, EU No 2019/788, started to apply from 1 January 2020, repealing the previous ECI regulation. To improve the initiative registration process and possibility of accession, the chance of partial registration of the initiative was added. The new Regulation set guidelines for creating an online platform where the Commission could support and advise the organisers of the initiative – right now it is known as European Citizen's Initiative Forum. Collecting the statements of support

    ⁹ Eiropas Parlaments. (2020). *Eiropas Pilsoņu iniciatīva*. Retrieved (15.06.2020) from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/lv/sheet/149/eiropas-pilsonu-iniciativa

    ¹⁰ EUR-Lex. *Citizens' Initiative.* Retrieved (15.06.2020) from: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/citizens_initiative.html

has been one of the biggest obstacles to the initiative procedure since the introduction of the regulation. The organisers have often encountered limited opportunities to reach such a large audience or had been hampered by the process of completing the statement of support itself. In order to help organisers and citizens the new regulation established online signature collection – right now it is centralised and supervised by the EU. The Regulation simplifies the data requirements for citizens based on nationality, allowing the organisers to set the date for the start of the initiative themselves, and to inform signatories of initiatives via email.[11]

The idea of the ECI is generally viewed favourably. It aims to encourage greater activity among citizens and to ensure that the representatives of the EU institutions pay more attention to the public's current interests and put them on the agenda.[12] The original regulation No 211/2011 explains that ECI straightens the democratic functioning of the EU, as it ensures a procedure that affords citizens with opportunity to directly approach the EC with a proposal for a legal act or changes in one.[13] One of the biggest concerns seen about the ECI is that, although citizens are proposing and presenting an initiative, the European Commission makes the final decision on whether a legislative proposal can be made based on this initiative.[14] In this aspect, the Commission has been heavily criticised for rejecting and not supporting for citizens' initiatives and for not launching public debates. After submitting an initiative, the Commission has two months to assess whether the initiative meets all the necessary criteria. In the event of full compliance, the initiative is registered and published on the Commission's website. Other options are partial registration of the initiative or refusal to register the initiative at the same informing the group of citizens submitting the initiative of the reasons for its decision.[15] In his study on EPI, Professor Erik Longo stated

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[11] Eiropas Komisija. (13.09.2017.) *Priekšlikums EIROPAS PARLAMENTA UN PADOMES RE-GULA par Eiropas pilsoņu iniciatīvu COM/2017/0482 final - 2017/0220 (COD).* Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LV/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017PC0482, accessed at15 June 2020.

[12] Alemanno, A. (2020). Europe's Democracy Challenge: Citizen Participation in and Beyond Elections. *German Law Journal, 21*(1), 39. Retrieved (15.06.2020.) from: doi:10.1017/glj.2019.92

[13] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:065:0001:0022:EN:PDF

[14] Eiropas Komisija. (13.09.2017.) *Priekšlikums EIROPAS PARLAMENTA UN PADOMES RE-GULA par Eiropas pilsoņu iniciatīvu COM/2017/0482 final - 2017/0220 (COD).* Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LV/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017PC0482, accessed at 15 June 2020.

[15] *Ibid.*

that the European Commission is using the same scheme for refusals, explaining that there is no appropriate legal basis for the initiative and that the Commission does not have the right to propose new legislation on this issue. At the same time, initiatives are often rejected because of the use of different interpretations of the law or referring to an incorrect article of the law, although another would be applicable.[16] It is nothing unusual that initiatives are rejected for similar reasons. Nevertheless, the fact that the basic ideas of these initiatives are not taken into account and revised so that improvements can be made in this area, accordingly to the ideas of citizens is worrying. It is interesting that the "Minority SafePack – one million signatures for diversity in Europe" initiative, which is now a successful initiative and is awaiting for the Commission's response, initially received refusal from the Commission to register the initiative. The reason for the rejection, as mentioned to be one of the most common motives is that the initiative does not fall within the competence of the Commission. After a three year long lawsuit that was started by the initiative organisers, the Commission reviewed the submission of the initiative. Nine of the 11 proposals in the initiative were recognized as valid and the organisers were able to start to collect statements of support.[17]

One of the risks of such an order is the worsening of relations between people involved in the initiative procedure (organisers, supporters) and EU, if the initiative is rejected. Tendencies like this can be observed with initiatives that have received a negative reply from the Commission. The issue is even more significant regarding the EC's decisions to ignore changes proposed by initiatives with at least one million supporters. Such a case can be observed with the first initiative, proposed by The European Federation of Public Service Unions "Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!" that went through the whole procedure and received an answer form the Commission. Its main idea was to call on the EC to propose legislation implementing the UN human rights on water and sanitation, to ensure that water resources and supplies are not covered by the same internal market rules. Moreover, the organisers called for the EC

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[16] Longo, E. (2019). The European Citizens' initiative: Too much democracy for EU polity? *German Law Journal, 20*(2), 193. Retrieved (15.06.2020) form: doi:10.1017/glj.2019.12

[17] European Commission. (2017). *Commission registers 'Minority Safepack' European Citizens' Initiative.* Retrieved (30.06.2020.) from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_17_776

to pass legislation ensuring that liberalisation does not affect water services and that the EU extends its activities to provide water and sanitation to all.[18] The initiative resulted in a review of the Drinking Water Directive in 2018 in order to contribute to the improvement of the water quality in the EU. At the same time, the organisers of the initiative expressed their displeasure with the lack of response, for example, by not imposing stricter restrictions on the liberalisation of water supplies, thereby not responding to the wishes of 1.6 million citizens.[19]

Organisers of the ECI "Stop vivisection" initiative reacted similarly. The aim of the initiative was to achieve the repeal of Directive 2010/63/EU, which governs the protection of animals used in science. Instead, organisers initiated a proposal to ban the use of animals for science, stipulating that only data that exactly fit the human species are valid for such studies.[20] The EC press report agreed with the initiative's main idea of stopping animals for scientific purposes, but expressed the view that this could be achieved by maintaining and improving the already existing directive, which the organisers of the initiative would like to repeal. The EC argued that a directive is currently needed to ensure a high level of protection for these animals, as long as science has not developed until certain safe alternative tests, such as cell or tissue crops, can be used in all research sectors.[21] The representatives of this initiative were disappointed and commented on the EC's statement that, "Powerful forces oppose any change".[22] These two cases highlight the situation that the EC has rights to decide what to do with the initiative – even reject it, even though if it has fulfilled all the criteria that have been set out for a successful initiative.

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[18] Eiropas Komisija. Ūdens un sanitārija ir cilvēka tiesības! Ūdens ir sabiedrisks labums, nevis prece! Retrieved (16.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2012/000003_lv

[19] Anglmayer, I. (2015). The European Citizens' Initiative: the experience of the first three years. European Implementation Assessment. In: *European Parliament*, 25. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/536343/EPRS_IDA(2015)536343_EN.pdf

[20] Eiropas Komisija. *Stop vivisection*. Retrieved (16.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2012/000007_lv

[21] Eiropas Komisija. (2015). *Paziņojums presei. Komisija atbild uz Eiropas pilsoņu iniciatīvu "Izbeigt vivisekciju"*. Retrieved (16.06.2020) from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/lv/IP_15_5094

[22] Stop Vivisection. (2016). *The Initiative*. Retrieved (16.06.2020) from: http://www.stopvivisection.eu/en/content/why-stop-vivisection

More complicated issues occurred with initiative "One of Us" which is initiative that until this day has been the most popular between EU citizens receiving 1 721 626 statements of support. The initiative focused on the integrity of a person, based on EU legal protection, from the moment the baby is conceived. The initiative called for the cessation of funding of activities involving the destruction of the embryo, including research and specific areas of health.[23] The initiative received great support in countries with broad Catholic communities, such as in Italy, Poland, and Spain; both Pope Francis and Pope Benedict were in favour of this initiative. The minimum number of supporters of the initiative was exceeded in 18 EU Member States. In its response on 28 May 2014, the Commission announced that it did not intend to present a new legislative proposal on the basis of the initiative, as recently a debate had already been held, and it is considered that the current policy and funding system are appropriate. The Commission also pointed out that the EU does not finance the destruction of embryos, but also carefully considers the ethical aspect. In the press release, the EC also stressed that, for example, stem cells derived from human embryos are important in studies to treat different diseases.[24] The organisers of the initiative argued that they were not correctly understood, and therefore went further to the Court of Justice of the European Union to address the matter and work of the EC. In addition, they stated, that the greatest achievement is to reach such a wide range of supporters for the idea, as well as to point out to the EU the contradictions of its democracy and the need to monitor the Commission's actions and recommendations more closely.[25] The flaws of EU democracy in this case would be the lack of action taken in response to the citizen initiative that reached a high support in the society.

Following the current data (20.06.2020) from the beginning of the application of the Regulation in 2012, the Commission has received 97 requests to register the initiative, 23 of which were rejected. In order to achieve

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[23] Eiropas Komisija. *Viens no mums*. Retrieved (19.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2012/000005_lv

[24] Eiropas Komisija. 28.05.2014. *Paziņojums presei. Eiropas Komisija atbildējusi uz Eiropas pilsoņu iniciatīvu "Viens no mums"*. Retrieved (19.06.2020) from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/lv/IP_14_608

[25] One of Us. (2018). *NdP Court of Justice of the European Union*. Retrieved (19.06.2020) from: https://oneofus.eu/2018/04/ndp-court-of-justice-of-the-european-union/

the approval of the ECI, it must follow three conditions. First, the initiative must comply with the principle of subsidiarity. Second, the initiative must be in line with the fact that the Commission can act on this issue, to issue a legislative act, rather than to present an initiative requesting action in any other way that does not comply with the Commission's competence. Third, whether the proposed initiative can be as assessed as necessary for the implementation of the EU Treaties.[26] As a result, 74 initiatives have been registered, five of which have been successful for the time being, and only four of these five have yet received an EC response. Currently, the ECI website states that there are 11 ECIs in the process of collecting signatures. Three of the successful ECIs were launched immediately in 2012, one has completed the whole process in 2017 and the last successful ECI, although registered in 2017, was concluded only in January 2020 and is still awaiting the Commission's response.[27]

Most citizens are still not aware of their ECI opportunity. It is hard to differently explain the low participation of citizens in the initiative process, taking into account the low activity of citizens within the framework of the ECI. If three Baltic states are taken as an example then the data is not thrilling. Latvia has reached the set benchmark of signatures twice, supporting initiative "One of Us" (9132/6000)[28] and "Minority SafePack – one million signatures for diversity in Europe" (6661/6000)[29], Lithuania has done this three times within initiative "One of us" (11 646/8250)[30] and "Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!" (13 252/8250)[31], and "Minority SafePack – one million signatures for diversity

[26] Athanasiadou, N. (2019). The European citizens' initiative: Lost in admissibility? *Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law*, *26*(2), 255. Retrieved (18.06.2020) from: https://doi.org/10.1177/1023263X18824772

[27] Eiropas Komisija. (2020). *Eiropas pilsoņu iniciatīva*. Retrieved (18.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/home_lv

[28] Eiropas Komisija. *Viens no mums*. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2012/000005_lv

[29] Eiropas Komisija. *Minority SafePack – miljons parakstu par daudzveidību Eiropā*. Retrieved (19.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2017/000004_lv

[30] Eiropas Komisija. *Viens no mums*. Retrieved (19.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2012/000005_lv

[31] Eiropas Komisija. Ūdens un sanitārija ir cilvēka tiesības! Ūdens ir sabiedrisks labums, nevis prece! Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2012/000003_lv

in Europe" (18 990/8250)[32] However Estonia, while overall showing larger activity than neighbour countries, has not reached the set number – 4500 – to be one of the 7 countries that help initiative pass the verification process. The signature collection process is a challenge to the connectivity and solidarity of European citizens. It is not enough that one country significantly exceeds the prescribed signature threshold, as the same result is required in at least 6 more countries. The new regulation tried to ease the process for signature collectors and initiative supporters, however it was applied only a half year ago, which is too short term to observe if it has made significant improvements.

Conclusion

The problem of democratic deficit has been addressed for a long time in the context of the EU. The EU is being accused of insufficient transparency in the decision-making process and of a complex system, which makes it inaccessible to citizens. The EU itself describes this problem as the remoteness of people from EU policy-making processes. The problem is that citizens do not have enough opportunities to effectively influence EU policies, which gives them a feeling that their opinion cannot change processes at the EU level. This, in turn, affects the support of citizens in the EU. The EU has acknowledged the democracy deficit issue and is working to find a solution in order to reduce the numbers of criticism that are aimed at ways how the EU engages its citizens in the policy making process. The sustainability of the European Union relies heavily on the support and participation of its citizens, since the EU stands for democratic values and to function properly it has to achieve support from its member countries. Observing the reduction of support, the EU is looking for and creating a variety of initiatives and opportunities to increase the integration and involvement of EU citizens in policy-making, which is often described as incomprehensible. In order to promote direct democracy within the EU and to address the democracy deficit issue, the regulation on the European Citizens' Initiative was introduced in 2012. The ECI is the only instrument providing for the possibility that a citizens'

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[32] Eiropas Komisija. *Minority SafePack – miljons parakstu par daudzveidību Eiropā*. Retrieved (19.06.2020) from: https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2017/000004_lv

initiative can be transformed into EU law, just as the EP and the Council can do. The initiative is a rather understandable opportunity for citizens to raise their ideas straight to the EC, in a form of a citizens' initiative that is in one way or another familiar in their own countries. From 2020, changes have been made to the ECI procedure, referring to the results of the studies and organisations' objections that the procedure adopted in 2011 is too complicated and inaccessible, particularly by noting the complexity of collecting the required number of statements of support within the deadline.

The European Citizens' Initiative is a unique democracy instrument in an international organisation. The ECI has focused mainly on increasing citizens' participation. However, even by taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the ECI, citizens' views are not always taken into account; moreover, they are often rejected by the Commission based on its own vision or competence. The first years of the initiative process are not to be seen as very successful, considering that only 5 initiatives (one is still in process) of total 97 requests have gotten to the last step – receiving answer form the EC about actions that the EC has decided to take. The new regulation, which applies form 1 January 2020, aims to ensure that citizens' initiatives are heard as much as possible by helping initiative organisers in many ways. The ECI could lead to a reduction of the Commission's exclusive rights, proposing legislative proposals, so that citizens' initiatives are not stalled within the Commission, but are more discussed, with a goal to ensure EU integration and support to citizens, as well as their engagement in politics.

The Attitude of France towards European Security Initiatives

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European security is mainly based on NATO presence in the region, but Emmanuel Macron considers it necessary to develop additional security mechanisms in Europe. However, these security initiatives have been widely criticized by other countries. Already during the pre-election period, Mr. Macron emphasized the necessity of sovereignty in the field of European security. This essay analyses five security initiatives supported by France in the region: Permanent Structured Cooperation, the European Defence Fund and the creation of the European Armed Forces, the European Intervention Initiative and the European Intelligence College.

Keywords: Emmanuel Macron, European security, France, initiatives, sovereignty of Europe.

Eiropas drošība tiek balstīta uz NATO klātbūtni reģionā, bet Emanuels Makrons uzskata, ka ir nepieciešams attīstīt papildu drošības mehānismus Eiropā. Citas Eiropas valstis plaši kritizē šīs drošības iniciatīvas. Jau savā priekšvēlēšanu laikā E. Makrons uzsvēra to, ka Eiropai jābūt suverēnai drošības jomā. Šajā esejā tiek analizētas piecas drošības iniciatīvas: Pastāvīgā strukturētā sadarbība, Eiropas Aizsardzības fonds, *Eiropas armijas* ideja, Eiropas intervences iniciatīva un Eiropas Izlūkošanas koledža.

Atslēgvārdi: Eiropas drošība, Eiropas suverenitāte, Emanuels Makrons, Francija, iniciatīvas.

Introduction

Recently the EU has evolved its cooperation in the field of defence, but the French President Emmanuel Macron considers it necessary to deepen

its cooperation without involving other international actors. Mr. Macron has repeatedly criticized the effectiveness of NATO and the American involvement to maintain European security. Although Mr. Macron's point of view on this issue has been widely debated and even criticised, the French leader considers it necessary for Europe to defend itself if needed, and remains convinced about the necessity of initiatives in the continent.

According to the website of the French Ministry of European Affairs and Foreign Affairs, France is advocating five security initiatives in Europe.[1] Firstly, France insists on the creation of a European Defence Fund (EDF) within the EU, mainly focusing on two areas: research and development of military technologies. Secondly, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) where France leads most of the projects in the initiative. Thirdly, an initiative that has been under discussion among the EU countries is the creation of the European Defence Forces. Fourthly, France has already started to build up European Intervention Initiative (EI2). Fifthly, France has recently set up the European Intelligence College.

The role of France and the European Defence Fund

The creation of the European Defence Fund (EDF) was first proposed by the European Commission in November 2016 and is currently supported by the EU heads of state and governments. On the basis of a detailed Commission proposal (dated 7 June 2017) the European Council called for its implementation. It should be emphasized that the creation of the EDF makes the EU the third largest defence investor in the EU after Brexit, behind France and Germany. The Council of the EU and the European Parliament are currently working on the modalities of the implementation of the EDF. The European Commission has proposed its creation as part of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework. In April 2019, the European Parliament reached a partial agreement on a regulation establishing the EDF after 2020.[2] The European Commission is responsible for monitoring the implementa-

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[1] Francijas Republikas Eiropas lietu un Ārlietu ministrija. [Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères]. *L'Europe de la Défense.* Available : https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/europe/l-europe-de-la-defense/

[2] Représentation permanente de la France auprès de l'Union européenne. *Fonds européen de défense.* Available: https://ue.delegfrance.org/fonds-europeen-de-defense

tion of the fund and selecting the projects that will be funded. The fund is a step towards the strengthening of Europe's strategic autonomy. This initiative is considered as necessary for the EU to have more integrated approach to the field of defence.

The aim of this fund is to increase member states' and the EU's investment in the field of research, the development of joint military capabilities and the possible acquisition of common military equipment, thus increasing efficiency between member states' military capabilities and addressing gaps in EU defence missions. The fund is mainly set up to fund research and development projects in the military field. In addition, there is a need to promote cooperation in the field of military technologies among member states by setting up a research unit. The research section includes grants worth 90 million from the EU budget until 2019 for defence cooperation. Co-financing will come from the EU budget, which aims to encourage member states to cooperate in the development of military equipment while reducing costs.[3] Cooperation in these two areas – research and development and acquisition of military technology – could potentially enhance the strategic autonomy of the community, as well as improve the European defence industry.

The European Defence Fund includes the European industrial base and how the creation of the fund will change the industry in the field of defence. It should be noted that this industry is an important aspect of the defence sector, with a particular focus on the economic and technological domains. The European defence industry is one of the most developed defence industries in the world, with a significant number of employees. For example, in 2016, the industry employed about 450,000 persons.[4] Efforts must be made to encourage the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in the fund, in particular to ensure that funding is available to representatives of all member states. The fund is also established to focus on the use and promotion of modern technologies, such as drones, artificial intelligence, satellite communications, as well as other military innovations and technologies

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[3] Commission Européenne, Représentation au Luxembourg. *Plan d'Action Européen de la Défense: Vers un Fonds Européen de la Défense.* Available: https://ec.europa.eu/luxembourg/news/plan-daction-europ%C3%A9en-de-la-d%C3%A9fense-vers-un-fonds-europ%C3%A9en-de-la-d%C3%A9fense_fr

[4] Ianakiev, G. (2019). *The European Defence Fund. A Game Changer for European Defence Industrial Collaboration*. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.iris-france.org/notes/the-european-defence-fund-a-game-changer-for-european-defence-industrial-collaboration/

for defence purposes.[5] New security threats are likely to become increasingly popular in the near future, thus the research of these security threats is needed within the EU.

It must be emphasized that this initiative is to be welcomed, as the EU needs to take responsibility for the defence field by guaranteeing the security of its citizens and protecting it from external threats. At the same time, the fund acts as a tool to improve technological innovation, thus introducing the latest technologies in defence to EU countries and improving the current situation of national military equipment. A strong industrial basis is an important factor in securing Europe's strategic autonomy, and France is one of the most important defence industry players in the continent. France is interested in promoting the need for the EDF in the region, thus taking the opportunity to boost the defence industry as a whole. At the moment the French industry covers 25% of European capabilities, moreover, it creates 400 000 jobs in 5000 different enterprises, thus creating an asset for French economy.

Permanent Structured Cooperation

Although PESCO was practically established only on 11 December 2017 by a decision of the EU Council, it was introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon already in 2009 in order to deepen the cooperation among those EU member states that are able and willing to do so. A total of 25 EU member states have joined PESCO, with the exception of Denmark and Malta. The government of Malta opted out of this initiative because certain operations could breach their neutrality.[6] Moreover, Denmark opts out of PESCO because the majority of its voters were against the Maastricht treaty at their referendum in 1992.[7] PESCO was established to enhance national defence capabilities for military operations. This could potentially enhance the EU's capacity as an actor in international security, enhance the protection of EU citizens and

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[5]   Csernatoni, R., Bruno Oliveira, M. (2019). *The European Defence Fund: Key Issues and Controversies*, 2. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.prio.org/Publications/Publication/?x=11332

[6]   Times of Malta. (2017). *Malta Among Three Countries Opting out of EU's New Defence Agreement.* Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/malta-among-three-countries-opting-out-of-eus-new-defence-agreement.665421

[7]   Danish Ministry of Defence. *EU – The Danish Defence Opt-Out.* Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.fmn.dk/eng/allabout/Pages/TheDanishDefenceOpt-Out.aspx

increase the efficiency of defence spending.[8] Unlike in the past, EU defence cooperation was decided on the basis of an intergovernmental agreement, but member states have now made long-term commitments and are legally bound to them. In the first half of 2017, France sought to create an exclusive and ambitious PESCO to enable capable and willing countries to prepare for the most skilled military operations, while Germany preferred a more inclusive PESCO with lower accession criteria so that the EU does not form new divisions.

French minister of foreign affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian in the interview in 2017 stated that "the creation of PESCO is a strong commitment to strengthen the European defence."[9] The French point of view on PESCO is not as dominating as it is towards other initiatives. Moreover, there is no strong national position towards it. Furthermore, their position can fluctuate across administrations, thus creating misunderstandings among other European allies. The wide range of public administrations such as the ministry of defence, the foreign office, the general staff and the national armament agency do not always see eye to eye. It is important to acknowledge the historical role of France in Europe while France seeks to renew their *grandeur* (greatness). However in order to achieve it the country needs to be one of the main actors of the EU. Active participation in PESCO is a crucial instrument to change the country's role in the region.[10]

On 6 March 2018, the Council adopted the initial list of 17 projects, the second series of 17 projects, the Council adopted on 19 November 2018, the third series of projects was adopted on 12 November 2019. Each of the projects is carried out by a changing group of PESCO participating member states, which are project participants and also project coordinators. In total, 47 projects are currently developed under PESCO in areas such as sea, air, land, cybercrime, training and joint capacity building. PESCO is also involved in other Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) initiatives, the

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[8] PESCO. Member States Driven. *About PESCO*. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://pesco.europa.eu/

[9] Représentation permanente de la France auprès de l'Union européenne. (2017). *La cooperation structurée permanente : un engagement fort pour un renforcement de l'Europe de la défense.* Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://ue.delegfrance.org/la-cooperation-structuree

[10] De France, O. (2019). *PeSCo. The French Perspective*, pp. 4 – 7. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Ares-37.pdf

Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and the EDF.[11] It should be noted that PESCO is under the authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, as well as the European Defence Agency and the European External Action Service.

Although PESCO had various shortcomings in its start-up activities, they are moving in the right direction when developing projects. They are in line with the priorities set out above. So far, the most successful projects are in the areas of intelligence, advanced logistics, ground combat capabilities and cyber security.[12] The most involved countries in PESCO projects are France with 30 projects, Italy with 26 projects, Spain with 24 projects and Germany with 16. The countries that have taken the lead in the most projects are France with 10 projects, Italy with 9 projects and Germany with 7 projects.[13] France's active participation in PESCO projects shows that it is in its interest to take the initiative and develop it further to take the lead among all the other countries involved in PESCO. Given that more than 40 projects have already been adopted, it is necessary to implement the projects with a commitment to carry them out in full even with the most ambitious projects. This is especially true for countries that are coordinators of several projects in order to not reduce the quality of implementation.

The idea of the European Army

Political leaders of European countries and EU institutions occasionally announce that the EU needs its own armed forces. On 6 November 2018, Mr. Macron proposed to create a *European army*, which could protect the continent if necessary. On 13 November 2018, German Chancellor Angela Merkel also confirmed her ambition to move towards a *European army*. Although this idea is probable, the risk remains that it would establish itself as a parallel structure to NATO.

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[11] European Union External Action. *Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) – factsheet*. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/34226/permanent-structured-cooperation-pesco-factsheet_e

[12] Efstathiou, Y.S. (2019). *Are PESCO projects fit for purpose?* Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2019/02/pesco-projects-fit-for-purpose

[13] Blockmans, S., Crosson, D.M. (2019). *Diferentiated Integration within PESCO – Clusters and Convergence in EU Defence,* p. 7. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.ceps.eu/?s=Differentiated+Integration+within+PESCO+-+Clusters+and+Convergence+in+EU+Defence

In the current situation, it would be reasonable to consider the creation of a *European army* as a desirable option, but this idea is at least 60 years old and appears in the debate with some regularity, especially in France and Germany. Furthermore, it can be considered that the idea is developed only on a theoretical level. It should also be mentioned that, in the case of the *European army*, the issue of financial resources and how this initiative could be financed plays an important role. For example, the United States spends 2.5 times more on its army than all the EU countries combined, meanwhile France, Germany and Italy invest the most to maintain their national security. There are concerns that several EU countries would be reluctant to abandon the US presence in the region, explaining that European troops do not have the capacity to deter, for example, Russia or China. Most of the military capabilities and strategies that provide the reach of NATO's missions are due to the participation of the United States.[14] The *European army* would need an integrated ground, air and naval forces operating under the central command, rather than on a country-by-country basis. It is necessary to realize that the creation of this *European army* would require the consensus of all its member states, and the creation of this model in the EU would require a transformation of its defence policy and the EU treaties. It is unlikely that several countries would like to transfer this part of sovereignty to the EU. The creation of a *European army* would contribute to the development of the EU according to the principle of federalism, deepening the integration of the union.

From the financial angle of the issue, European countries are no longer able to act together in five areas of warfare, such as land, sea, air, cyberspace and space. Firstly, the military technologies are beyond the financial capabilities of the European countries. However, they make it possible to act more efficiently, furthermore, the more complex the armament, the higher the cost of producing it. Mass production is making military technology affordable and Europe can support its industry by doing so. Secondly, European countries take part in armament competition only partially. The drastic reduction in defence budgets is reflected in the reduction of army formats, longer use of equipment, lack of capabilities and lack of investment in

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[14] Braw, E. (19.11.2018). A "True European Army"? Dream On. In: *Wall Street Journal*. Eastern edition, New York, N.Y. Retrieved (22.06.2020) from: https://search-proquest-com.db.rsu.lv/docview/2135022359/E7B3898372B14948PQ/3?accountid=32994

research and technological development, thus losing autonomy.[15] Higher costs, a lack of resources and a lower allocation of funds are trends that reflect the current situation in most of the EU countries, which does not allow them to defend themselves effectively when needed.

Mr. Macron believes that European defence is too fragmented and there are other ways to tackle this problem. For instance, Finland and Sweden have been integrating separate air and naval units since 2013. The Swedish, the Finnish and the Norwegian Air Forces regularly conduct joint training and use each other's air bases. European defence integration is only possible if future commanders are aware of the differences among various armed forces.[16] France's defence is striving to become a continental military force strong enough to give Europe a certain degree of autonomy in proportion to its population and a higher level of economic development. France has its highly developed defence industry and France conducts its missions, especially in Francophone Africa, and coordinates European defence projects. France wants to assert itself as an important player in European security, but it needs German support to reach its goal.[17] It should be noted that an important aspect of their desire to build a European Armed Forces is its defence industry, such as Airbus, a multinational company headquartered and based in Toulouse that manufactures military transport aircraft, would be able to build the necessary equipment for the EU.

As long as there is a desire to maintain the current position in the East and the leader of the US is Donald Trump who believes that NATO european members should invest more financial resources, while questioning the benefits of the alliance for the United States, the commitment to European forces will be maintained. At present, there is no clear perspective for the creation of a *European army*, but so far France and Germany keep this idea alive.

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[15] Mauro, F., Jehin, O. (2019). *Why Do We Need a European Army?* 3. Retrieved (22.06.2020) from: https://www.iris-france.org/securite-defense-et-nouveaux-risques/page/4/

[16] Trybus, M. (2016). *The Legal Foundations of a European Army*, 10. Birmingham: Institute of European Law. Retrieved (22.06.2020) from: https://primolatvija.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_ubira_epapers2105&context=PC&vid=371KISCRSU_VU1&lang=lv_LV&search_scope=default_scope&adaptor=primo_central_multiple_fe&tab=default_tab&query=any,contains,european%20army&offset=0

[17] Ibrahim, A. (05.09.2019). Europe Is Ready for Its Own Army. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/05/europe-is-ready-for-its-own-army/

The development of the European Intervention Initiative

EI2 was officially launched on 25 June 2018 with the signing of a letter of intent by nine European countries – Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands and Portugal. Italy was invited but did not sign the letter of intent. It is an initiative aimed at fostering a common European strategic culture and creating the conditions for further coordinated and jointly prepared commitments across the crisis.[18] The initiative involves countries that have demonstrated their political will and military capability to engage in the operations. It should be emphasized that this initiative is not limited to EU member states, and is currently available to a limited number of European countries, but the enlargement is possible in the long term.

Although formally other European countries could later join EI2, this seems to run counter to the selection criteria (those who are able and willing) and the idea of effectiveness in expanding the group involved. New candidates need to accept a letter of intent and should bring added value.[19] Finland has been a member of EI2 since 7 November 2018, but Sweden, Norway and Italy plan to join the initiative.

The draft agreement sets out the main elements of the initiative. Firstly, it is a forum for those countries that are able and willing to involve their military forces when and where it is needed to protect Europe's security interests throughout a crisis, without prejudice to areas of activity for which institutions are already in place. Secondly, it focuses on four main areas. Thirdly, it will not create a permanent *European army*, nor provide the creation of a new rapid reaction force, as it will build on existing structures and a network of liaison officers in the various military structures of the participating countries.[20] EI2 is a response to events such as terrorism, migration crises

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[18] Francijas Republikas Aizsardzības ministrija [Ministère des Armées.] *L'Initiative européenne d'intervention*. Available: https://www.defense.gouv.fr/fre/dgris/action-internationale/l-iei/l-initiative-europeenne-d-intervention

[19] Zandee, D., Kruijver, K. (2019). *The European Intervention Initiative. Developing a Shared Strategic Culture for European Defence,* p.3. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/The_European_Intervention_2019.pdf

[20] Mills, C. (23.09.2019). *The European Intervention Initiative (EII/EI2).* Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8432

and natural disasters.[21] In addition, the participation in any of the special initiatives or operations will be subject to sovereign national decisions, and EI2 intends to contribute to ongoing efforts by NATO and the EU to deepen defence cooperation.

Recently, France has intervened in crisis situations in the southern neighbourhood of the EU, thus the idea of EI2 is rooted in the country's experience, such as the French intervention in Mali in 2013. Already in 2012, France warned its European partners about the Islamist threat to Mali, but at the last minute, after the French intervention other EU partners agreed to take collective action. France was dissatisfied with the slow response of the EU to military operations. In 2015, France launched the mutual assistance clause provided in Article 42 (7) TEU and requested EU partners to provide operational support in Africa and the Middle East.[22] The state triggered this clause at the time of the November 2015 terrorist attacks by the Islamic State in France.

The content of the initiative is currently being developed, however already it is possible to identify several advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, in EI2 each country analyses the situation from its own point of view and assesses how it would be necessary to protect itself from threats in coordination with other states. Secondly, the initiative operates outside the EU institutions with flexible operating procedures. This operating principle could be described as rather pragmatic: without specific and defined criteria for involvement and accession, without long-term commitments and strict rules, thus avoiding excessive bureaucracy and creating greater independence through direct contacts between the capitals of the participating countries.[23] Moreover, it is necessary to establish a geographical balance within the EI2, as the accession rules cover an extremely wide range of countries.

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[21] Moya Cánovas, L. E. (2019). *The European Intervention Initiative, Permanent Structured Cooperation and French Institutional Engineering,* p. 6. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: http://www.ieee.es/contenido/noticias/2019/09/DIEEEO79_2019LUIMOY_UEDef.html

[22] Koening, N. (2018). *The European Intervention Initiative: A look behind the scenes.* Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.hertie-school.org/en/delorscentre/publications/detail/publication/the-european-intervention-initiative-a-look-behind-the-scenes/

[23] Mauro, F. (2018). *The European Intervention Initiative: Why we should listen to German Chancellor Merkel.* Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.iris-france.org/115776-the-european-intervention-initiative-why-we-should-listen-to-german-chancellor-merkel/

It should be emphasized that the EI2 letter of intent does not provide a definition of what constitutes a strategic culture, but it describes which areas of the EI2 should be focused on in order to improve their capabilities for military missions and operations. According to point 6 of the draft agreement, a common strategic culture is the main objective of the initiative, but elsewhere the text refers to the need for further steps to develop the EI2 together, thus improving the collective response.[24] More specifically, the letter of intent emphasizes the strengthening of a strategic culture in order to develop greater unity in responding to crises, rather than its other aspects.

The EI2 is by definition a forum which raises existing criticisms of the initiative. The choice of this term suggests that the EI2 is a structure with few specific objectives and should instead focus on the consultation and exchange of information rather than on practical action. The EI2 is considered to be similar to the European Political Co-operation proposed by France, which was set up outside the then European Community to coordinate foreign policies of member states.[25] The EI2 is by definition a forum, not a tool or a framework, so it can be concluded that the EI2 is a think tank where ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged, rather than a place designed to change or improve the situation.

According to sources, military and political personnel find the seminars useful to build closer contacts and share experience. The desire to explore new topics, such as the direction of Indian Ocean security work, shows that the EI2 is ready to develop its knowledge and practical skills within different regions in order to apply them when needed.[26] Although this initiative is currently being implemented, there are a number of issues that will determine its success in the future. Firstly, France will have to show that it is ready to listen to its partners and not allow another initiative to be seen as just an

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[24] Vācijas Federācijas Aizsardzības ministrija [The Federal Ministry of Defence]. (25.06.2018). *Letter of Intent Concerning the Development of the European Intervention Initiative (EI2)*. Available at: https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/25706/099f1956962441156817d7f35d08bc50/20180625-letter-of-intent-zu-der-europaeischen-interventionsinitiative-data.pdf

[25] Nováki, N. (2018). *France's European Intervention Initiative. Towards a Culture of Burden Sharing*, 11. Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://www.martenscentre.eu/publications/frances-european-intervention-initiative-towards-culture-burden-sharing

[26] Bel, O. R. (2019). *Can Macron's European Intervention Initiative Make the Europeans Battle - Ready?* Retrieved (20.06.2020) from: https://warontherocks.com/2019/10/can-macrons-european-intervention-initiative-make-the-europeans-battle-ready/

effort. Concerns have been repeatedly expressed that the EI2 could dupli-
cate EU security policy principles or the EU, but EI2 is being designed to
strengthen the EU and NATO, forcing some member states to make better
use of their defence capabilities. EI2's wide range of member states gives the
initiative a greater response and scope without geographical or thematic
constraints and the EI2 includes European countries that have made opera-
tional commitments to the security of the continent. This means that France
intends to develop defence cooperation outside the EU, moving from an
EU-focused to a European-oriented approach to defence. France emphasizes
the need to promote a strategic culture outside the EU but this argument
may be questioned regarding how this could be reflected in reality.

European Intelligence College

About a year and a half after the Sorbonne speech in Paris on 5 March
2019, Mr. Macron announced the creation of the European Intelligence
College to allow the sharing of practice and the strengthening of European
defence. In his speech at the Sorbonne university, Mr. Macron emphasized
the European Intelligence College as an effective way to support the conti-
nent's security infrastructure and intelligence gathering. The *Elysée* confir-
med that representatives from outside Europe, including European allies,
would not be invited to the initiative.[27] It should be mentioned that it does
not replace existing structures and is not a part of the EU. European Intel-
ligence College is an instrument to increase European Intelligence capability.

On 26 February 2020, representatives of 23 countries gathered at a con-
ference in Zagreb to sign an agreement for the establishment of the European
Intelligence College. Thirty countries, including all EU member states, as
well as the United Kingdom, Norway and Switzerland, have been invited to
participate in the initiative. EU countries, such as Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland,
Luxembourg and Greece, as well as Switzerland and Norway, have not yet

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[27] LeFigaro. (04.03.2019). Macron Inaugure Demain Le "Collège du Renseignement en Europe.
LeFigaro. Retrieved (22.06.2020) from: https://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2019/03/04/97001-
20190304FILWWW00209-macron-inaugure-demain-le-college-du-renseignement-en-europe.php

joined.[28] Formal meetings among countries are scheduled two to three times a year, but the headquarters of the institution will be in Paris. The unresolved issue within the European Intelligence College remains the section on funding for the establishment and operation of this institution. As this body is not affiliated with any EU entity, funding needs to be provided by the member states, however, official information on how countries provide funding for this body and how it intends to do so in the future of the College is not available.

The Intelligence College is an intergovernmental initiative for European security, producing professional and academic opinions on a wide range of intelligence-related topics and disseminating them to contribute to the development of a strategic intelligence culture in Europe. The College serves as a think tank and forum for the development of this industry in the region.[29] Its work facilitates strategic dialogue between European countries, allowing heads of different enterprises to meet and compare their experiences. Strategic dialogue is also fostered between the intelligence communities and academia through publications and the development of an academic program for intelligence professionals. In addition, a dialogue is established between intelligence communities and decision-makers to raise awareness of intelligence issues and challenges.[30] It should be noted that national security authorities tend to be particularly cautious when sharing information, and this is usually done through bilateral agreements rather than multilateral agreements, so it is questionable how much information the countries will want to disclose and whether this will be done at all. On the other hand, multilateral cooperation in this area could be beneficial for small countries due to the high costs of cooperating in a bilateral context. In addition, there are doubts as to whether services in large countries, such as MI6, DGSE, BND, will be willing to cooperate with services in other EU member states, given that this information is usually confidential.

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[28] HINA. (26.02.2020). First Step Taken Towards Establishing Intelligence College in Europe. *Total Croatia News.* Retrived (22.06.2020) from: https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/41753-intelligence-college

[29] Le Collège du Renseignement en Europe. *Présentation*. Available: https://www.intelligence-college-europe.org/?lang=fr

[30] Le Collège du Renseignement en Europe. *Activités*. Available: https://www.intelligence-college-europe.org/?lang=fr

Analysing the information provided about the European Intelligence College, it can be concluded that this initiative is not developed in sufficient detail and it is not clear what E. Macron wants to achieve with it. Although this initiative is in the process of developed, it can be seen from the public information that its practical actions may differ significantly from the plans they had developed. Although the very beginning of the college's operation has begun, it is still not precisely defined what this institution will do. On the one hand, it is a forum and a think tank, on the other hand, it is a research centre. It is necessary to start a practical process in order to understand what countries will actually use in institution building and whether they will be willing to share this kind of information.

Conclusion

To sum up, France is actively involved in five European security initiatives that are still in development. It should be noted that these initiatives were emphasized as necessary at the same time, but implemented gradually, and all of them are planned to be implemented without the participation of the United States, so it is repeatedly asked whether Europe has the capacity for it. Additionally, in the process of developing initiatives goals are detailed so that they do not duplicate existing security organizations and forums. The process of speeding up the initiatives has been delayed because of internal problems in the EU such as Brexit and because of France. The country has been a less vigorous leader because of its domestic political problems. In addition, it should be emphasized that the EI2 and the European Intelligence College are initiatives that are being implemented at the European level, involving countries outside the EU. It should be noted that both initiatives emphasize that only European countries will be invited to join, but the conditions for the accession have been unsuccessful. For example, the EI2 is open to countries in the European region and is willing and able to participate fully in the initiative. This set of conditions should be refined and it should be clarified which countries are eligible to join the initiative. Meanwhile, PESCO, the *European Army*, EDF are initiatives developed at the EU level.

In the creation of the EI2, France draws on the experience of several countries in dealing with crisis situations, thus confirming that the creation

of this forum is not just an idea and a theoretical form. The decision to allocate EDF funding until 2027 is to be decided by the European Commission, which indicates that the EU is interested in developing this area at the Union level, but the selection of projects within the fund is not clear. The idea of a *European army* has appeared several times during the existence of the EU, but with no success.

France seeks to renew its historical influence and role in Europe which was not well seen during the previous presidencies. Current security initiatives can be seen as a mechanism to change it. Although European security has repeatedly been in ineffective security mechanisms situations during the recent years France as one of the leaders in Europe, is aware of the need for change in this area. At the same time it provides an opportunity for France to strengthen its position as a leading player in foreign policy, balancing relations with other actors, such as the USA.

The future scenarios of the European Union and Latvia

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Over the last decade, the European Union has experienced several challenges – economic instability, migration crisis, increasing Euroscepticism, as well as climate change to name a few. To adapt to the new realities the European Commission in 2017 issued the so-called White Paper outlining five potential future scenarios. Often the most viable option is thought to be the "Multi-speed Europe" concept allowing those member states that want to reach a common goal, to do so. It has been concluded that if Latvia was to join specific cooperation initiatives, they would mainly have to be focused on improving the public sector, whereas it is less likely that Latvia would join initiatives aimed at fighting social issues.

Keywords: Brexit, Enhanced Cooperation, Future of the EU, Latvia, Multi-speed Europe, White Paper.

Pēdējo desmit gadu laikā Eiropas Savienība ir piedzīvojusi virkni izaicinājumu – ekonomisko un finanšu krīzi, migrācijas krīzi, pieaugošu eiroskepticismu, kā arī klimata pārmaiņas un grūtības, kas izriet no pielāgošanās tām. Izvēršot to, kā cīnīties ar šīm jaunajām realitātēm, Eiropas Komisija 2017. gadā izdeva tā saukto Balto grāmatu, kurā izklāstīti pieci potenciāli nākotnes attīstības scenāriji ES. Publiskajā telpā bieži izskan, ka vislabākais risinājums ir "vairāku ātrumu Eiropas" koncepcija, saskaņā ar kuru tās dalībvalstis, kas to vēlas, var vairāk sadarboties konkrētās jomās. Esejā tiek secināts, ka, ja šīs pieejas mehānismi tuvākajā nākotnē ES līmenī tiks paplašināti, pastāv lielāka iespēja, ka Latvija iesaistīsies tajās iniciatīvās, kuras fokusētos uz pārvaldes sakārtošanu (t.sk. tiesu sistēmas), mazāk – uz sociāla rakstura jautājumiem.

Atslēgvārdi: Baltā grāmata, Brexit, ciešāka sadarbība, ES nākotne, Latvija, vairāku ātrumu Eiropa.

Introduction

This essay takes a broad look at the EU's potential future development scenarios keeping in mind the increasing disparity on the methods and tools used by member states when dealing with new challenges. The scenarios are based on the so-called White Paper of 2017 which is a document outlining five potential scenarios for how the EU could evolve in the near future. The main focus of this paper is on one scenario – "Those who want more do more" and taking into account the current development of Latvia in various sectors analyzing in which areas of potential cooperation does Latvia have a greater chance of getting involved.

The new realities

After the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union (EU) in 2016, some described it as the 'beginning of the end' for the EU. However, since 2016= things have changed. Not only the EU member states are aware of the challenges facing the Union, but also the public perception of the bloc has changed rapidly. Keeping in mind that about a third of Europeans want to leave the EU[1], it is worth mentioning that optimism about the future of the EU has risen by more than 20%, and people generally feel more connected to the EU than before the Brexit referendum.[2]

At the same time, there is an increasingly universal idea, both in official circles and in the broader public, that the EU needs to be reformed in a way that would allow the bloc to adapt to current and future challenges (e.g. issues related to migration, climate change, international order, etc.). For instance, shortly after the Brexit referendum, there were a number of political forces in Europe (e.g. the National Front in France) that believed that the EU would experience a "domino effect" with many countries eventually leaving the bloc. However today this rhetoric has been replaced by the idea of reforming the

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[1] The Economist. (2019). *The Brexit vote's lasting impact on Britain and Europe*. Retrieved from: https://econ.st/2MmthnW

[2] Eurobarometer. (2019). *Standard Eurobarometer 91*. Available: https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/standard/surveyky/2253

EU according to the agenda of these political forces.[3] It is also important to mention that the EU's official position has also shifted in favor of reforming the system by strengthening the institutional, financial and political structures of the bloc.[4]

Bearing in mind challenges such as a rapidly aging society, climate change, economic turbulence, technological development, etc., in 2017 the European Commission developed a White Paper outlining five potential scenarios for how the EU could evolve to adapt to the new realities.

Future scenarios

In response to Britain's withdrawal from the EU, a straightforward document was created outlining the potential development of the EU-27 bloc. The authors of the White Paper[5] completely avoided a plain binary division, where one option entails deeper integration and the other disintegration. Instead, a number of potentially overlapping scenarios are offered.[6]

The five proposed directions for the bloc's future range from narrowing the scope of the EU to significantly increasing its responsibilities. For instance, in addition to the idea of moving towards a single model of integration, two new concepts are included, according to which participation in key policy areas would not be mandatory. Interestingly enough, the neutral language used in the document does not give away which of the scenarios is preferred by its authors. However, as mentioned above, much of the document focuses on the challenges and threats facing Europe: aging, security, climate change and concerns about the current socio-economic model. It is also mentioned that confidence in the EU is declining and that all too often there is a disproportionate expectation between what member states want to

[3]   Smith, S. (2019). *Brexit effect? Europe's populists back away from calls to leave the union.* Retrieved from: https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/brexit-referendum/brexit-effect-europe-s-populists-back-away-calls-leave-union-n1029176

[4]   European Parliament. (2019). *European Parliament says EU must reform before enlarging further.* Available: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+IM-PRESS+20061207IPR01152+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN

[5]   European Commission. (2017). *White paper on the future of Europe: Five scenarios.* Available: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/future-europe/white-paper-future-europe/white-paper-future-europe-five-scenarios_en

[6]   Kwan, D. S., Yu, F.-L. T. (2019). *Contemporary Issues in International Political Economy.* Singapore: Springer Singapore. p.275.

gain from membership in the bloc and what is actually in the EU's expertise (a relevant example is the dissonance in national responses to the Covid-19 crisis)[7].

Several passages also emphasize the need to keep promises. Such rhetoric has been echoed in Jean-Claude Juncker's statements several times before the White Paper, for example in the State of the Union address[8], as well as in the Bratislava Declaration of 2016[9].

The scenarios of the White Paper are as follows – "Carrying on" which proposes moving forward with the current reform agenda; "Nothing but the Single Market" that entails focusing on the single market if member states are unable to act jointly and decisively in areas such as migration, security, and defense. The third scenario, titled "Those who want more do more", proposes that countries that want to enhance cooperation in specific areas may do so on a voluntary basis. "Doing less more efficiently", envisages bolstering cooperation on issues where all countries can agree. The fifth and final scenario, "Doing much more together", proposes a comprehensive integration of the bloc and an increase in the powers of the EU and its institutions.

In this essay the author will pay more attention to the third future scenario – "Those who want more do more" – also known as "Single direction, but different speeds", given that in several areas this scenario is already a reality, as well as it provides an opportunity to act quickly and efficiently. Therefore, the research question is as follows: "In which areas of potential cooperation does Latvia have a greater chance of getting involved, taking into account the current development of Latvia in various sectors?"

To find an answer to the research question, data from the European Semester assessment of Latvia in the period from 2011 to 2020 will be analyzed. A more detailed description of the research methodology is available in the section "Analysis".

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7   Chadwick, L. (2020). *'The future of the European project is at stake': EU in crosshairs of coronavirus pandemic.* Retrieved from: https://www.euronews.com/2020/03/27/the-future-of-the-european-project-is-at-stake-eu-in-crosshairs-of-coronavirus-pandemic

8   European Commission. (2017). *PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER'S State of the Union Address 2017.* Available: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_17_3165

9   Council of the European Union. (2016). *Bratislava Declaration and Roadmap.* Available: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/lv/press/press-releases/2016/09/16/bratislava-declaration-and-roadmap/

"Those who want more do more"

"Multi-speed Europe" (also known as "Variable-geometry Europe" or "Core Europe") is the idea that different countries within the EU should integrate at different levels and paces depending on the domestic political situation in each country. This approach may seem optimal in the light of discussions on deepening vs. widening, as well as growing opposition in situations where it is difficult to reach a consensus. Given that the number of member states has almost doubled in the last 16 years, this concept stems from the understanding that there is an increasing number of areas, in which there are disproportionate differences in the problem solving approach of member states.[10]

It may therefore only seem logical that there is a need for a mechanism that allows those countries that want to achieve a common goal to do so voluntarily and thus avoid resistance from other members. Already in early 2017, the governments of Germany and France, as well as the Benelux countries, repeatedly submitted various proposals in favor of a multi-speed Europe (some proposals being a "Two-speed Europe") with the intention to move forward in policy areas such as defense, internal security, economy and fiscal policy.[11] Their proposal was harshly criticized by the Visegrad countries in a joint statement.[12]

Despite these differences, there is a clear indication of a growing demand for some sort of a multi-speed model. However, it is worth mentioning that if this scenario does become a reality, some of the areas that are currently considered a high priority (such as migration and border policy, internal and external security, economic and social policy) will lose their importance. For instance, in recent years in the area of migration policy, member states have mainly focused on strengthening the Union's external borders while paying little to no attention to overcoming crucial key obstacles

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[10] EUR-Lex. (2020). *Glossary of summaries – 'Multi-speed' Europe*. Available: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/variable_geometry_europe.html

[11] Ayrault, J. M., Steinmeier, F. W. (2016). *A strong Europe in a world of uncertainties*. Retrieved from: https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Europa/Aktuell/160624-BM-AMFRA_ST.htm

[12] Visegrad Group. (2017). *"Strong Europe – Union of Action and Trust", Input to Rome Declaration 2017*. Available: https://www.vlada.cz/assets/media-centrum/aktualne/Joint-Statement-of-the-Headsof-Governments-of-the-V4-Countries-_Strong-Europe-_-Union-of-Action-and-Trust_-Input-to-Rome-Declaration-2017.pdf

(e.g. implementation of a common asylum policy and integration policy) kicking the can down the road.[13]

In the field of security, steps are taken to strengthen the European Common Security and Defense Policy, as a follow-up to the EU's Global Strategy. However, a number of complex political issues remain yet to be addressed. For example, PESCO, which is the main format of cooperation in the field of defense, does not have clear criteria for participation and funding, with some countries favoring voluntary membership and others preferring selection on the basis of actual military capabilities.[14]

Eurozone integration has long been a contentious issue as well. On one hand there are countries that emphasize the need to first and foremost fully implement the agreements already in place. While on the other hand are those member states that want a more ambitious and comprehensive reform of the Eurozone, including the introduction of burden-sharing principles. In addition, there is another controversial issue regarding the inclusion of a social dimension in economic policies, which has been proposed by some member states but is not widely advertised in order to avoid further conflicts.[15]

The figure below summarizes the areas that are currently in place related to the multi-speed principle. These areas are in line with the "enhanced cooperation" instrument introduced with the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. According to this principle, any nine EU member states can work together on a joint initiative focusing on a common goal. This format is intended to overcome a paralysis situation when a proposal is blocked by an individual country or a small group of countries that do not wish to participate in the initiative. At the same time, this cooperation prevents the extension of powers beyond those permitted by the EU Treaties.[16]

[13] European Commission. (2019). *European Agenda on Migration four years on: Marked progress needs consolidating in face of volatile situation.* Available: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_6075

[14] Brzozowski, A. (2019). *Brexit uncertainty delays EU's defence industry plans.* Retrieved from: https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/brexit-uncertainty-delays-eus-defence-industry-plans/

[15] Copeland, P. (2020). *Governance and the European social dimension: politics, power and the social deficit in a post-2010 EU.* New York: Routledge.

[16] European Commission. (2019). *Enhanced Cooperation.* Available: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/enhanced_cooperation_-_already_a_reality_in_the_eu_1.pdf

Figure 1. *The current cooperation mechanisms within the "Enhanced cooperation"*

It is important to emphasize that the main differences on policy acceptance in the EU do not overlap from a geographic perspective. Currently, there is an East / Southeast – West division in terms of their understanding of the concept of national sovereignty and a North-South divide in their priorities for economic governance. A gap in national perceptions of the concept of sovereignty can be seen in the context of the refugee crisis, where most Central and Eastern European countries opposed a binding resettlement scheme. This was the most prominent example besides the instance when the European Commission insisted on qualified majority voting for resettlement of refugees from Greece and Italy. It is true, however, that these lines blurred out a little bit during the implementation of the Council's decision, as some Central and Eastern European countries, such as Slovenia and the Baltic States, complied with the quotas in question, despite the initially harsh criticism.[17]

Another example of the "sovereignty gap" is the case of the rule of law violations in Poland and the question of whether the EU should intervene in matters related to constitutional reforms and violations of the democratic principles enshrined in the EU treaties. Some post-communist countries have repeatedly opposed a consensus vote on events in Poland, while countries such as Luxembourg, Belgium and Sweden have been among the strongest supporters of a united response (proposing economic sanctions or even taking away Poland's voting rights).[18]

In terms of economic governance, the bloc's southern countries, such as France, Portugal, Spain, Greece and Slovenia, have repeatedly emphasized the need for greater integration, while most member states in the North and

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[17] Veebel, V. (2015). Balancing Between Solidarity and Responsibility: Estonia in the EU Refugee Crisis. *Journal on Baltic Security, 1*(2), 28–61. doi: 10.1515/jobs-2016-0020

[18] DW News. (2018). *European Commission triggers Article 7 against Poland*. Retrieved from: https://www.dw.com/en/european-commission-triggers-article-7-against-poland/a-41873962

East prioritize improving the quality of existing policies.[19] This division can also be seen in the context of the Covid-19 crisis.[20]

It is clear that there are and always have been differences and disputes within the EU. Indeed, the Union's goal has always been to reach consensus through complex negotiation processes. An essential component of these mechanisms is transactions and benefit exchanges in different policy areas to compensate for the losses incurred in developing trade-offs. The divisions described above can be seen not only in national political choices, but also in attitudes towards integration and the different features of national cultures. Thus, for example, in addition to various perceptions of security threats stemming from different history and geography, there are also contrasting perceptions on the EU as a wealth generator. This is most visible when member states may feel unfairly treated when the discussion about the net beneficiaries and net contributors takes place.[21]

Recent crises have also revealed significant divisions in terms of which countries prefer the idea of national sovereignty as opposed to those that prefer a supranational approach to EU affairs and its ability to interfere in member state internal affairs. Some states (e.g. Poland and Hungary) suggest that stronger intergovernmental cooperation, effectively depriving the European Commission of its current powers is the right way to go. Other bloc members would like a stronger Commission but are not fully satisfied with its current functioning. To summarize, the political and institutional shortcomings in EU governance stem from these differences and uncertainties.

The prospect of Latvia within a Multi-speed Europe

In order to measure each member states' progress in specific policy areas, the European Commission has been issuing an annual report on each EU member state since 2011, assessing progress in implementing structural reforms, preventing and correcting macroeconomic imbalances. These reports

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[19] Weber, A. (2019). *Europe's Banking Union.* Retrieved from: https://www.bloomberg.com/quicktake/europes-banking-union

[20] Amaro, S. (2020). *'Corona bonds': Here are three reasons why Germany and the Netherlands oppose the idea.* Retrieved from: https://www.cnbc.com/2020/04/08/corona-bonds-reasons-why-germany-and-the-netherlands-oppose-the-idea.html

[21] Dougan, M., Shuibhne, N. N., & Spaventa, E. (2012). *Empowerment and disempowerment of the European citizen.* Oxford: Hart Publishing.

are referred to as European Semesters and they aim to ensure that member states' public finances are sound and that there is no excessive public debt, thus preventing disproportionate macroeconomic imbalances within the EU. Supporting structural reforms and encouraging investment are also key objectives.[22] This section of the essay will calculate in which areas Latvia has made the greatest progress so far, thus predicting in which cooperation areas Latvia could potentially become involved at the EU level in the future, whether through the Enhanced Cooperation mechanism or otherwise. It is important to note that each report includes country-specific recommendations or CSRs, which allow them to be accurately operationalized and measured.

In the period from 2011 to 2020, 12 CSRs were addressed to Latvia with some consistency (at least twice), each of which was evaluated annually in five categories: no progress (0); limited progress (1); some progress (2); significant progress (3); full implementation. The table below summarizes all 12 of these CSRs, grouped into three categories.

Economics / finance	CSR 1	Reduce taxes for low-paid workers by shifting taxes to other sources.
	CSR 2	Improve tax compliance.
	CSR 3	Ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of the anti-money laundering framework.
Social issues	CSR 4	Address social exclusion.
	CSR 5	Improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of education and training, especially for low-skilled workers.
	CSR 6	Improve the availability, quality, and cost-effectiveness of the health care system.
	CSR 7	Focus innovation and research on investment-related economic policies.
	CSR 8	In addition to innovation, focus on transport, especially its sustainability.
Public administration	CSR 9	Pay attention to resource efficiency and energy efficiency, energy interconnections.
	CSR 10	Improve the transparency, accountability and efficiency of the public sector.
	CSR 11	Strengthen the transparency and accountability of public administration by protecting whistleblowers and preventing conflicts of interest.
	CSR 12	Improve the efficiency of the judiciary.

Figure 2. *CSRs addressed to Latvia, mentioned in the reports at least 2 times*

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[22] European Commission. (2020). *The European Semester: why and how?* Available: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/european-semester-why-and-how_en

All the recommendations described can be divided into three categories – (1) economics and finance, (2) social issues and (3) governance. Of these three categories the biggest focus has been on social issues (including health, education, innovation and mobility), followed by issues related to public administration (efficiency of the judiciary, transparency) as well as economics (e.g. improvement of the tax system and implementation of the principles of solidarity).

The following figure shows the annual assessment of the relevant CSRs. The numbers in the table describe the categories of assessments – for example, if the CSR is rated as "no progress" for the respective year, it is shown as 0 in the table.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	Average
CSR 1:	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1,56
CSR 2:	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1,89
CSR 3:	3				0	2	2	2	2	1,83
CSR 4:	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0,78
CSR 5:	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		2,00
CSR 6:	2	2	2	1	1	1				1,50
CSR 7:	2			2	2	2	1	2	0	1,57
CSR 8:	2					2	1	2		1,75
CSR 9:	2					2	2	2		2,00
CSR 10:	2	1	1	1	2	2		2	0	1,38
CSR 11:	2	2	1	2	1	1	2			1,57
CSR 12:						2	3	2	2	2,25

Figure 3. Evaluations of CSRs dedicated to Latvia in the period 2011-2020.

Looking at these evaluations, it can be concluded that even though no CSR has ever reached full implementation (a value of 4) at any given year, there are three specific areas where the average is above 2 (achieving some progress). These include (1) efforts to improve the efficiency of the judiciary, (2) improving resource and energy efficiency, and (3) improving education and training for low-skilled workers. At the same time, there are three areas that average below 1.5, including (1) efforts to improve public sector accountability, transparency and efficiency, (2) improving access to the health care system, and (3) reducing social exclusion.[23]

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[23] European Commission. (2011-2020). *Country Reports: Latvia.* Available: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2020-european-semester-country-reports_en

Conclusions

Over the last decade, the European Union has experienced a number of turbulences that will have a lasting impact well into the future, including social inequality, aging, climate change, shifting balance of power on the international stage, technological development and the shortcomings of the Covid-19 crisis. In an effort to predict potential bloc development scenarios, the European Commission in 2017 issued the so-called White Paper outlining five potential directions: (1) for Europe to stay as it is, (2) to focus on the Single market, (3) a single direction, different speeds, (4) collective action in specific areas, (5) a "full speed Europe".

Often the most optimal and most suitable option for today's climate is the so-called "Multi-speed Europe", given that in the current situation there is no complete overlap of views or positions between groups of countries on different policies and the pace of integration. Therefore, for example, in 2009 the Treaty of Lisbon introduced the "Enhanced Cooperation" mechanism, which allows any nine bloc member states to cooperate in a specific area without resistance from other countries.

Based on the analysis made in the essay on Latvia's progress in specific policy areas in the period from 2011 to 2020 based on the European Semester reports, it can be concluded that if the "Enhanced Cooperation" instrument is expanded in the near future, then there is a greater chance that Latvia will get involved in those initiatives that would focus on improving the public sector and its governance (including the judiciary), whereas less on initiatives focused on social issues.

Young political leaders are critical, yet fully optimistic of the future of the EU and NATO

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Latvian Transatlantic Organization, in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Baltic States and the Latvian Political Science Association from 9 May to 20 June gathered young political leaders from all around Latvia in weekly online discussions on issues such as the future of the European Union, democracy and values, security, public participation, economic development, and the ongoing progress in EU-NATO relations. This article comprises together ideas, which were expressed during the weekly discussions of the young leaders about the previously mentioned issues.

Keywords: democracy and values, economic development, EU-NATO relations, public participation, security, the future of the European Union, young political leaders.

Latvijas Transatlantiskā organizācija sadarbībā ar Konrāda Adenauera fondu Baltijas valstīs un Latvijas Politologu biedrību no 9. maija līdz 20. jūnijam pulcēja Latvijas jaunos politiskos līderus iknedēļas tiešsaistes diskusijās. To laikā tika apspriestas tādas tēmas kā, piemēram, Eiropas Savienības nākotne, demokrātija un vērtības, drošība, sabiedrības līdzdalība, ekonomiskā attīstība un ES un NATO attiecības. Šis raksts apkopo jauniešu izteiktās idejas par apspriestajiem jautājumiem iknedēļas diskusiju laikā.

Atslēgvārdi: demokrātija un vērtības, drošība, Eiropas Savienības nākotne, ekonomiskā attīstība, ES un NATO attiecības, jaunie politiskie līderi, sabiedrības līdzdalība.

Introduction

The young political leaders' workshop was an event held by the Latvian Transatlantic Organization, in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Baltic States and the Latvian Political Science Association, which gathered youth from all regions of Latvia. Each member of the workshop can truly be considered a young leader based on their individual experience in political participation – work in NGOs, voluntary activities, organizing the shares of the Latvian Student Association, work experience in school or student self-governments or even in the military field. Many of the participants are also students of political science or international relations. Several participants are members of political party youth departments, members of the European Parliament's election commission, as well as the Youth Parliament.

The participants came together for online discussions each week where they discussed important issues about Latvia, the EU and NATO. As part of the programme, they were given the opportunity to explore the views and experience of Latvia's leading politicians, practitioners and political scientists, thus the discussions helped to gain insight into the practical application of the knowledge they had learned in their weekly meetings. This article is a compilation of the weekly discussions between the young leaders and it highlights conclusions that could be used as lessons to be learned and to some extend even as recommendations for future policies.

Discussion on the future of the EU as a democratic union

The future of the European Union (henceforth, EU) is a subject which has many important topics of discussion – starting from questions about the influence of major powers (such as the US, China and Russia) and the EU eventual strategic autonomy, to climate change, demographic questions and rising social challenges of European societies. The Covid-19 caused crisis has brought with it further concerns regarding the future of Europe.

When analysing the impact of Covid-19on the future of the EU, there is a certainty that populism will spread further to EU countries, which could in some way reduce their unity and stability. The flow of popular sentiments towards populist ideas in Europe right after the financial crisis of 2008 allows

to predict similar tendencies for the post-pandemic period. As one of the first signs of such tendencies is the situation in Italy towards which political analysts are currently pointing. Moreover, certain anti-EU and anti-democratic forces use this opportunity to increase their popularity, for example, by highlighting China as an authoritarian state and its fight against the virus (although it should also be noted that China formed a media campaign that made it look like a more successful country in dealing with the crisis). While in countries such as Poland and Hungary, the potential rise of populism and Euroscepticism is high, and it could lead to the loss of people's confidence in democracy in the EU. Some might even believe that democracy works when the situation is peaceful and stable, but in times of crisis it limits the possibility of decision-making. As another point mentioned often is the opinion that discussions with negative sentiment towards the EU would grow, given the seemingly delayed response and the absence of a joint plan at the start of the crisis.

At the same time, one could mention that populist political parties have demonstrated an incapability to react appropriately and manage the crisis, which allows to doubt the rise of further populism in Europe as well. Thus, the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemics has illuminated the limits of populism, as German Chancellor Angela Merkel has rightly pointed out recently. These different views on future changes in the balance of power in EU member states demonstrate ambiguity and uncertainty of the political agenda in Europe.

There could also be an increase in nationalism, hand in hand with the ideas of populism, which will lead to a change of the ruling elite at national level in member states where the public's position against the government's crisis policy has been negative. One of the future scenarios could also be closer regional cooperation. Therefore, it can be concluded that the future of the EU depends on whether there will be solidarity-oriented or isolationism targeted politicians in the governments of EU member states which is why it is more important than ever to strengthen unity in the EU.

Another challenge that the EU is facing is migration and disproportional worsening of the situation of third countries nationals across the EU caused by the pandemic. Migration policies during the Covid-19 crisis have been neglected and many people are stuck in refugee or migrant camps

without opportunities to be protected. Residence and work permission processes due to lockdown restrictions have become more complex and slower, while integration, social protection and education programs are under risk to be narrowed down. The second wave of migration appears to be expected, where people from poorer EU countries with lower welfare levels will emigrate to more developed EU member states (thereby widening the already existing wealth inequality gap between EU member states, as this would reduce the capacity of the most underdeveloped EU countries). A possibility to help the poorer EU countries would be smoothing the differences in the EU. It is strongly believed that the EU should not continue to align their differences directly in the cultural field, as it would destroy the specificities of each country, but there are many areas where member states can cooperate and adapt more so that there are no huge differences between countries, such as access to healthcare and access to education. It is important that the EU provides this feeling of cooperation.

In relations with other major powers, the EU can be praised for its climate neutrality objectives. A possible solution that the EU could introduce to others is a "pollution" tax or enter into a joint agreement with foreign companies that are the biggest polluters. There is a concern that neither the US nor China would be under such EU pressure and would most likely introduce restrictions on imports from the EU, so the EU needs to use its legislative power wisely to drive and adopt increasingly new regulations and directives promoting green energy.

No discussion about the future of the EU can be made without mentioning enlargement. For the most part, it is believed that the EU should not take on new member states at the moment – the EU needs to deal with its internal problems in order to move forward with its enlargement. It is important to build stronger and more effective links with neighbouring countries and resolve the identity crisis of the Union, caused by the differences, especially in the interpretations of democracy. The issue of Hungarian membership can be highlighted, given that one of the values of the EU is democracy and its decline is witnessed in the country. At the same time, the EU enlargement will and should be carried out in the future and the Balkans have the most potential for cooperation.

The future economy of the EU

This year, the EU economy will experience one of the deepest recessions it has faced. There are many reasons for it, but the main is the pandemic. Despite the proactive policy responses at both national and EU levels, member states are facing many economic challenges and risks, including inflation, unemployment, new lockdowns and further decrease of economic activity. Although the EU has been successful to overcome different crisis in the past, it is important to discuss what are the measures to be implemented to strengthen the EU economy and to promote European solidarity. The aim of this chapter is to highlight some of those economic issues, which participants of the masterclasses discussed as the most topical.

The Covid-19 will result in a more cohesive and more positive perception of integration in part of Europe. But there are countries that have shifted from globalized to protectionist and individualist policies under the influence of this crisis – how will this factor affect future economic developments in the EU? It was stated that a number of countries are beginning to be frustrated by globalization (also taking into account that COVID-19 was spreading so quickly due to globalization) and the time of the virus can be used as a cover to increase their individualism, which is largely what populists are preaching. National interdependence has now proven to reduce the possibility of conflict, as well as EU membership has worked in favour of most member states. Individualism is not good for the future of the EU, because the EU itself is by its very nature, an antithesis for protectionism. The EU could use this COVID-19 time to improve the economic strength and unity of the union internally to emerge from the crisis as a powerful actor on the global economy stage.

Purposeful support for member states by EU leadership is one of the instruments for strengthening its members, to improve integration and to maintain EU as a powerful economic actor at the global stage. However, there are still risks associated with the implementation of this ambition. One such risk is a risk of a two-speed economic recovery, where wealthier Northern European states will recover faster and weaker economies, such as the Baltics or Italy and Spain will crawl back. Such national and regional disparities have a potential to inflame further political tensions between member states and thus undermine stability of the Union.

Another no less important issue is a question of how the EU can realize green economy projects and to access the resources it needs to recover and to become more competitive, while using a climate-neutral approach and develop sustainable and resilient supply chains. In this context, some might see the Green Deal as an opportunity for sustainable development, redesigning industries and an opportunity to stimulate growth of certain European economies, while others see more challenges and risks such as, a lack of finances or insufficient political will of politicians at national level. These growing debates, which are fuelled by popular demand, especially by younger generations, demonstrate that tackling climate change will never return to moderate bureaucratic routine work.

The Green Deal has a potential to tackle certain challenges that the EU economy is facing, while others are still unsolved and are under the risk of not solving their issued through the proposed measures. One of such challenges is insufficient competition of large European companies in comparison of their counterparts in other regions of the world. There is a limited number of EU companies between world's biggest and most influential enterprises. This tendency has many reasons, but one of the main ones, considered by a number of analysts, is the economic policy of EU regarding the unification repurchase of enterprises. This policy not only limits the growth of such corporations but is rather built to protect local markets and small and medium-sized enterprises. This means that Europe should continue to seek more nuanced approaches towards reenergizing their economy and trading rules.

Security and democracy in the context of COVID-19

It is essential to understand whether the development of EU security mechanisms in the context of COVID-19 will change. The central belief is that everything depends on whether the EU stimulus programme will effectively combat the economic crisis. If the crisis is as severe as expected, EU mechanisms will become more decentralized. In general, it can be agreed that the EU will focus on the digital strategy and the development of digital sovereignty more seriously, since in the current situation many companies have to digitalise an essential part of their activities through technology developed outside of the EU, thus causing dependency on other countries

and exposing European citizens to greater risks. It is certain that the EU is lagging in the process of digitalization in comparison with other regions, it is necessary to address this problem as soon as possible, because if not dealt with it can lead to an economic downturn which would also undermine the EU's democratic character and its unity.

The area of security is not the topic which we can leave unattended, the Covid-19 crisis should not throw EU security mechanisms back in any way. There may be fewer resources devoted to security for a moment, but security issues are and will always be vital. Security mechanisms also encourage cooperation between countries and increase possible forms of assistance if needed in different situations. Safety mechanisms which are already in place (e.g. Frontex) can also be improved and used more effectively: it is not necessary to devise a new method, especially at a time when the Covid-19 crisis is to be dealt with quickly and efficiently. EU security mechanisms are also vital during the Covid-19 crisis within the EU – they can provide assistance with oppression of the virus.

To conclude, if the EU wants to build itself as a world-class superpower, then a strong and united EU military is a necessity. This form of military union is open for debate as the young political leaders state their own positions on the form of military cooperation. Security is and will remain a priority for the European Union. In fact, the EU should and eventually will start paying more attention to wider risks, including biological threats, in its security policy.

It should be stressed that disinformation in the context of Covid-19 was particularly important as disinformation could have had a significant impact not only on public opinion but also on political actions. The main focus is on the fact that disinformation is particularly important in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, since the consequences of this crisis are very much dependent on peoples' opinions and their actions. If disinformation is distributed, people will do risky and dangerous things. Yet the dilemma is it must not limit communication, even if it includes disinformation – censoring the discussion will further polarize people who don't already trust the government.

Disinformation can influence not only public opinion but also political decisions. People responsible for political decisions are most often well informed about what is and what is not disinformation, but currently political forces are also involved in distributing disinformation and that

possesses a serious threat. Disinformation currently favours populism the most. Countries will somehow have to try to adapt and look for ways to further reach the people with their information who have started to support such populistic ideas. Conspiracy theories provided by disinformation have much in common with populism: they both offer simple answers to complex and difficult-to-explain events.

What would be the greater threat to people at the moment? The Covid-19 virus or a state-sponsored disinformation campaign about everything that is going on? With these questions, it is pointed towards Russia's initial efforts not to take preventive measures to restrict the virus, but to pursue an expanded media disinformation campaign. Disinformation has existed for hundreds of years. What is unique for this day and age? Thanks to such extensive access to information, it is much easier for these beliefs to rapidly spread and polarize our society.

EU-NATO relations

To look into EU-NATO relations, primarily there is a need to figure out how to understand the wording of an "EU Army". Would it be necessary and beneficial, without considering the fact that most of the EU members are also part of NATO?

The creation of an EU army is an idea that has existed for more than 50 years, but it has not been realized for practically different reasons during any period. First, the realization of this idea would threaten a significant part of national sovereignty, and this is the main reason why countries do not want to consolidate their armed forces, so that EU integration from a federalist perspective would also be stepped up. Second, it would be a supportable idea, given that NATO is mostly on the shoulders of the United States, but since the beginning of the Donald Trump presidency statements have been made about the US presence in guaranteeing European security. Ideally EU countries should be able to defend themselves independently without relying on the involvement of other international actors, but to what extent would EU countries be prepared to sacrifice themselves for this purpose? Europe should pay more attention to security as it is a key factor for the EU to become a superpower but it should be considered whether the EU army is really an overstatement. At the moment, PESCO (Permanent Structured

Cooperation) is a successful programme that allows countries to participate if they want to and see the benefits. The EU should continue to focus on this type of project and not forget the fact that it is primarily an economic and political union. It is possible to determine whether it is even possible to efficiently rule such a multinational army, but NATO has already proven that multinational army units are not a problem. The EU should continue the integration process and cooperate more in defence matters and try to agree on a single foreign policy. While the foreign policy interests of each member state differ it will be difficult to talk about the creation of a single army in its classical sense.

The future EU-NATO cooperation seems optimistic but it is not without a few potential obstacles. It is in the interest of all member states to maintain the current defensive *status-quo*. It is necessary to address the deteriorating relationship. It should be noted that the current French leader is sceptical about the current effectiveness of NATO action and believes that the organization needs reforms, although its guided initiatives are considered complementary rather than NATO replacement activities. The obstacle is certainly the involvement of the United States in NATO since Donald Trump himself has stated that he wants to distance himself from NATO. Given these points, cooperation will be effective but it is a necessity to take into account the member state criticism of NATO and to develop future cooperation on the basis of past errors and conclusions.

The driving force of any change will be the *status-quo* assurance. If NATO will not be able to provide – the chances of establishing an "EU Army" will drastically increase. When looking at how the US might affect EU-NATO relations it should be noted that it is not clear what the result of the US elections will be. It could lead to the elimination of changes that are too early to predict.

Conclusion

These extensive sessions with the participants of the masterclasses have proven that young adults see the European Union as an opportunity for progressive democracy and they are eager to make the EU a better place in which they see unlimited potential. Not to be mistaken by unwarranted optimism – young leaders often criticised the ongoing problems concerning

the EU, but in parallel to the criticism, they offered their own vision and a solution to the problems. They showed a great interest in positive progress and their proposed vision was precisely substantiated. It is apparent that the majority of the participants support liberal ideas and democratic approaches to problem resolution. During the workshop it was proved that even the most complicated issues can be led to a conclusion with constructive dialogue.

To conclude, it is inevitable that these young people, who finished this workshop, will be the driving force of Latvia and the EU after a few years. And that is the reason why it is so important to analyse and comprehend how these emerging political leaders see our world and what they are eager to change. The better we understand these young individuals and their ideas, the better understanding we will have of the future of Latvia and the EU.

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POLITOLOGU BIEDRĪBA

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EIROPAS SAVIENĪBĀ