



The EU and member states: sharing the same orbit?

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#BB4EU

Ongoing tensions around the European project have been accompanied by what could be described as popular disaffection towards the European Union. Other elements have also created a divide between the EU and its citizens, revolving around the idea of solidarity: the Eurozone crisis, the refugee and Schengen crisis, the looming threat of a “Brexit”, which all represent at their heart differing views about a common future for Europe. What is the role of the institutions in reflecting and enacting these preferences and how can we bridge contrasted national perspectives to better legitimise the EU in the eyes of the citizens?

This conference will present the results of a unique EU 28 project called “[Building Bridges project between national perspectives on the European Union](#)”.

9h30-9h45 ***Presentation of the results of the Building Bridges project***

Vivien Pertusot, Head of Brussels office, Institut français des relations internationales (Ifri)

9h45-11h15 ***Do Europeans still like (each) others?***

The fundamental success of European integration seems to be under a stronger pressure than ever, between the rise of protectionist tendencies borne from the increasing success of populist parties in Europe and the refugee crisis, which has spurred bitter debates across the EU. Solidarity is a dirty word. This has led to tense situations which have raised questions about the viability of such an arrangement. How would changing the terms of these freedoms affect the European project? Is there a desire at the European level to do so?

Julie Hamann, Programme Officer, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), Germany

Antoinette Primatarova, Programme Director, EU, Centre for Liberal Strategies (CLS), Bulgaria

Márton Ugrósdy, Research Fellow, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT), Hungary

11h15-11h30 *Coffee break*

11h30-13h00 ***Is growth still associated with the EU?***

The effects from the 2008 economic crisis do not seem to have receded in all parts of Europe, causing fears of a growing gap between various member states. How can the EU continue to play a role in spurring economic competitiveness and support the European economy, but at the same time also preserve the social safety net that citizens rely on? Can tensions in the Eurozone impact these guarantees?

Yiannos Ioannou, Research Associate, Cyprus Centre for European and International Affairs, University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Lola Raich, Associate Researcher, Austrian Institute for International Politics (OIIIP), Austria

Senada Selo Sabic, Research Associate, Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO), Croatia

13h00-14h00 *Lunch*

14h00-15h30 ***How to strengthen the EU in member states?***

The European Union is perceived very differently across member states. Under stress in some, wholeheartedly supported in others, it actually leaves very few citizens indifferent. And as the EU is seen through lights, there may not be a single approach to strengthen the EU across all member states. What could be those different options then? Are they great leap forward into further integration or more concrete and tangible projects? What role can play national actors in this realm?

Ana Benje, Research Fellow, Institute of European Studies and International Relations, Comenius University, Slovakia

Maja Kluger Rasmussen, Senior Analyst, Think Europa, Denmark

Guido Lessing, Professor, Centre for European Studies and Research (CERE), Luxembourg

Mihai Sebe, Project Coordinator, European Institute of Romania (IER), Romania

15h30 – 15h45 *Coffee break*

15h45-17h15 ***Does the EU need to be more active in the world?***

One of the fields where attempts to be European have been plentiful but not often successful is foreign policy. A form of EU foreign policy has been emerging for decades and the Lisbon treaty could have accelerated the process. It has barely achieved that goal. Since the beginning of the 2010s, crises have broken out on the edge of Europe and most often, the EU is a secondary actor at best. It has not quelled the calls for more common actions. Should the EU step up its game? Can it be a way to foster optimism in the eyes of citizens?

Dominique David, Advisor to the Executive Chairman, Institut français des relations internationales, France

Sandra Fernandes, Professor, University of Minho, Portugal

Roderick Pace, Director, Institute for European Studies, University of Malta, Malta

