

THE CRISIS BEHIND THE EUROCRISIS

The Crisis behind the Eurocrisis encourages dialogue among scholars across the social sciences in an attempt to challenge the narrative that regarded the Eurocrisis as an exceptional event. It is suggested instead that the Eurocrisis, along with the subsequent crises the EU has come to face, was merely symptomatic of deeper systemic cracks. This book's aim is to uncover that hidden systemic crisis: the 'crisis behind the Eurocrisis'. Through this reading it emerges that what needs to be questioned is not only the allegedly purely economic character of the Eurocrisis, but, more fundamentally, its very classification as an 'emergency'. Instead, the Eurocrisis needs to be regarded as expressive of a chronic, dysfunctional, but 'normal' condition of the EU. By following this line of analysis, this book illuminates not only the causes of contemporary turbulences in the European project, but perhaps the 'true' nature of the EU itself.

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The Crisis behind the Eurocrisis

THE EUROCRISIS AS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL SYSTEMIC
CRISIS OF THE EU

Edited by

EVA NANOPOULOS AND FOTIS VERGIS



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You can't be neutral on a moving train
Howard Zinn

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Preface

The origin of this volume can be traced to a quick exchange on a dark cloudy morning in 2013 between a young lecturer and an old PhD researcher at the Law Faculty of the University of Cambridge. The Eurocrisis was at its apex. In the entrance hall of the (now) David Williams Building, we were coming out of a workshop where the recent *Pringle* judgment had been discussed and criticised. We were not all that surprised that the ‘survival of the eurozone’ had apparently emerged as the primary objective of the EU that would cast aside any other consideration. But there was a feeling that the established discourses, the optimistic complacency of perpetual ‘further integration’, and the traditional tools by which EU law was always approached, had suddenly become obsolete. Dozens of similar, yet longer, conversations between us were born out of that brief exchange as the crisis kept unfolding. Being Greek meant we were attuned to developments back home over the months that followed; from the government shutting down the public broadcaster mid-air, to political upheaval and the adoption of successive emergency ‘multi Acts’ of Parliament that transformed the legal landscape towards a clear neoliberal trajectory, deepening precariousness, uncertainty and inequality, to the emergence of reactionary nationalistic forces that began to shape the public discourse. Our conversations continued, more concerned each time and more frustrated that the emergency narrative seemed to have won the day and academic scepticism was quick to be dismissed.

By autumn 2014 an idea had formed: since there was relatively little critical discussion about the causes of the crisis, the deeper and systemic nature of which was perhaps clearer to those associated with any of the countries that were in the eye of the storm than to those that had the luxury of distance, we would set up a forum to invite such discussion. Supported by some of our colleagues and friends who had recent relevant experience, and to whom we owe our thanks (Dr Alysia Blackham and Dr Amy Ludlow), we pitched the idea to the Centre of European Legal Studies (CELS) of the Cambridge Faculty of Law. With the generous help of the Centre, we were grateful that Prof. David Dyzenhaus and Prof. Emiliós

Christodoulidis agreed to participate in a small seminar to discuss the concept of crisis and its contemporary systemic manifestations by placing it within the context of modern constitutionalism and the legacies of the Enlightenment. That event would be the precursor to the conference on the Eurocrisis that led to the present volume.

As the conference was set up during 2015, a wave of dramatic developments unfolded: the election of the SYRIZA government, the risk of Grexit, the Greek referendum and capitulation of July 2015, and, eventually, right as we were about to welcome our speakers, the call for a UK vote on EU membership. Sponsored and supported by CELS as well as King's College, Cambridge, the Eurocrisis conference was held in March 2016 in Cambridge Law Faculty; it was clear that the time was ripe for critical voices.

This volume is the result of the discussions triggered in that conference and to the friendships and collegial relationships that were forged during those days. Some of this volume's contributors based their chapters on their conference presentations or built and expanded on the same themes. Others joined the project later, agreeing it was imperative to engage in more critical debate and situate the narrative of 'crisis' within a discourse as to the nature and condition of its systemic context.

We hope that this volume will be just one of numerous contributions to signify this shift in established discourse. A sincere discussion about the weaknesses of the current variation of the 'European project' can only help expose the true causes of its apparent 'crises', and perhaps facilitate the realisation that another Europe is indeed possible.

Eva Nanopoulos and Fotis Vergis

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Work on this collection, from its initial conception until its eventual production, has been lengthy, strenuous and not without setbacks at times. During the long process to bring this volume to print both of us moved on from Cambridge to new endeavours. However, we remain grateful to Prof. Kenneth Armstrong and Prof. Catherine Barnard (former Directors of CELS, both professors of EU law at the University of Cambridge), for the unyielding support, guidance, advice and constructive criticism, and to Mrs Felicity Eves-Rey of CELS, without the help and hard work of whom the conference that led to this volume would have been impossible to organise. We are also grateful to those that presented papers or chaired sessions in the March 2016 conference on the Eurocrisis that are not featured in this collection (Prof. John Ryan, Prof. Brendan Simms, Dr Ewan McGaughey, Dr Javor Jancic, Jorge Correcher Mira, Dr Pieter van Cleynenbreugel, Elena Paris) and to all participants that contributed to the discussion. In addition, we wish to thank our colleagues with whom we shared insights and concerns all through the Eurocrisis: Prof. Simon Deakin, Dr Alicia Hinarejos, Dr Albertina Albors-Llorens, Dr Markus Gehring, Dr Niamh Dunne, Dr Samuel Dahan and Dr Rumiana Yotova.

We also wish to express our gratitude to all those who were directly involved with the development of the present collection, which would not have seen the day without their hard work, devotion, academic rigour and patience. This of course includes all the contributing authors of this volume, whether they were committed to the project since its inception or jumped on board at a later stage. Their commitment and the quality of their work is what defines the collection. Equally, however we owe thanks to the hard work of our editors at Cambridge University Press and every member of the its team that was engaged with the project at various points in time: Finola O'Sullivan, Elizabeth Spicer, Rebecca Roberts, Gemma Smith, Tahnee Wager, Marianne Nield, Becky Jackaman, Karthik Orukaimani, Martin Barr and Birgitte Necessary. We also want to thank Jack William Head who helped with the editorial work on some of the chapters in preparation of the full manuscript.

Special thanks are due to Dimitris Naiplis (N_Grams). Dimitris is an Athens-based visual artist working on a wide variety of media and artistic techniques, including sketches, public interventions/installations and street art. His art has been presented in numerous group shows in Greece and cultural festivals around the world. We were delighted he agreed to provide his work, drawn on the eve of the July 2015 referendum, at the apex of the Greek crisis, for our cover.

Lastly, there is a special place in our hearts for those that tolerated our days of stress and sleep deprivation and endured missing holidays and weekends, while we were living, dreaming and breathing Eurocrisis. Eliza and Owen not only had to go through the Eurocrisis itself, but they also had to experience the equally severe effects of partners writing about it. They survived both. And for their patience, they don't just have our utmost gratitude; they have our love.

Eva Nanopoulos and Fotis Vergis
(London – Manchester, 9 May 2018: Europe Day and Victory Day)