

Governance and Politics in the Post-Crisis European Union

The European Union of today cannot be studied as it once was. This original new textbook provides a much-needed update on how the EU's policies and institutions have changed in light of the multiple crises and transformations since 2010. An international team of leading scholars offers systematic accounts of the EU's institutional regime, policies and community of people and states. Each chapter is structured to explain the relevant historical developments and institutional framework, presenting the key actors and current controversies, and discussing a paradigmatic case study. Each chapter also provides ideas for group discussions and individual research topics. Moving away from the typical neutral account of the functioning of the EU, this textbook will stimulate readers' critical thinking towards the EU as it is today. It will serve as a core text for undergraduate and graduate students of politics and European studies taking courses on the politics of the EU, and those taking courses in comparative politics and international organisations, including the EU.

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More Information

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Contents

	List of Figures	page viii	
	List of Tables	ix	
	List of Contributors	X	
	Foreword	xiii	
	Acknowledgements	XV	
	Chronology	xvi	
	Glossary	xviii	
	List of Abbreviations	xxii	
1	Introduction: The European Union as a Political Regime, a		
	Set of Policies and a Community after the Great Recession	1	
	Ramona Coman, Amandine Crespy and Vivien A. Schmidt		
	Part I The EU's Political Regime	31	
2	European Regional Integration from the Twentieth to the Twenty-first Century Kiran Klaus Patel	35	
3	Institutions and Decision-Making in the EU Sergio Fabbrini	54	
4	Regulatory Networks and Policy Communities Jacob Hasselbalch and Eleni Tsingou	74	
5	Rethinking EU Governance: From 'Old' to 'New' Approaches to Who Steers Integration Vivien A. Schmidt	94	
	Part II Key Policy Areas in Flux	115	
6	Cohesion and the EU Budget: Is Conditionality Undermining Solidarity? John Bachtler and Carlos Mendez	121	
7	Agriculture and Environment: Greening or Greenwashing? Gerry Alons	140	



vi Contents

8	The Internal Market: Increasingly Differentiated? Michelle Egan	159
9	The Economic and Monetary Union: How Did the Euro Area Get a Lender of Last Resort? Cornel Ban	179
10	Social Policy: Is the EU Doing Enough to Tackle Inequalities? Amandine Crespy	196
11	Labour Markets and Mobility: How to Reconcile Competitiveness and Social Justice? László Andor	217
12	Managing the Refugee Crisis: A Divided and Restrictive Europe? Sarah Wolff	238
13	Security in the Schengen Area: Limiting Rights and Freedoms? Julien Jeandesboz	258
14	Trade Policy: Which Gains for Which Losses? Ferdi De Ville	278
15	Global Tax Governance: Is the EU Promoting Tax Justice? Rasmus Corlin Christensen and Leonard Seabrooke	294
16	The CSDP in Transition: Towards 'Strategic Autonomy'? Jolyon Howorth	312
	Part III Existential Debates	331
17	North and South, East and West: Is it Possible to Bridge the Gap? Kristin Makszin, Gergő Medve-Bálint and Dorothee Bohle	335
18	Democracy and the Rule of Law: How Can the EU Uphold its Common Values? Ramona Coman	358
19	Democracy and Disintegration: Does the State of Democracy in the EU Put the Integrity of the Union at Risk? Joseph Lacey and Kalypso Nicolaïdis	378



> vii Contents Appendix 1 EU Institutions and Organs 398 Appendix 2 Decision-Making in the EU: The Ordinary Legislative Procedure 402 Appendix 3 Distribution of Competences between the EU and the Member States 403 Appendix 4 Differentiated Integration and Varying Membership 405 Appendix 5 Who is an EU Member State? 406 Appendix 6 Who Does What in the EU? 408 Index 409



More Information

Figures

3.1	Policy coordination in the EU foreign policy	page 67
3.2	The intergovernmental method in the EU economic policy	69
4.1	The regulatory network of the European Medicines Agency	80
4.2	The policy community of the Rethink Plastic Alliance	81
7.1	Price support in the CAP	142
17.1	Average GDP per capita as a percentage of core average	
	by group with standard errors	338
17.2	State capacity as a percentage of core group average,	
	1996–2017	339
17.3	Logged GDP per capita by state capacity, 2017	340
17.4	EU structural fund payments as a percentage of GDP	343
17.5	Timeline of financial assistance	348
18.1	The Rule of Law Framework	369
A2.1	Functioning of the ordinary legislative procedure	402
A4.1	Differentiated and embedded memberships in the	
	EU, the eurozone and the Schengen area	405
A5.1	Map of the European Union	407



More Information

Tables

2.1	Founding member states of various European	
	organisations	page 37
3.1	EU decision-making regimes	55
3.2	Treaties of the EU	62
5.1	Three approaches to EU governance, old and new	96
6.1	Conditionality in Cohesion Policy: key dates	127
6.2	Application of conditionalities in public policy	131
11.1	The benefit-risk matrix of mobility	229
18.1	Chronology and legal basis	361
18.2	Chronology: legal changes in Poland and EU action	370
A3.1	Distribution of competences between the EU and the	
	member states	403
Δ6 1	Who does what in the FII?	408



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Foreword

This book was written in times of great turmoil in the European Union. The financial crisis of 2008, which turned into a debt crisis destabilising the eurozone, the crisis of the EU migration and border policies in the face of increased inflows of migrants since 2014, recurring disputes around violations of democracy and the rule of law, and the Brexit referendum in 2017 have all profoundly tarnished the EU. While its raison d'être, forged in the second half of the twentieth century, was rooted in peace, liberal democracy and welfare capitalism in a bipolar world, the EU has been increasingly regarded as unable to secure these values in the world of the twenty-first century. The past decade, we argue, constitutes a critical juncture, with particularly profound implications for how we understand the EU. Unlike many academics belonging to earlier generations of EU scholars, we do not take for granted a teleological vision of EU integration, whereby an 'ever closer Union' is the ineluctable goal of EU politics. Contemporary politics shows us how contingent and fragile the very existence of the Union is. In the same vein, we do not necessarily consider the deepening of integration in given policy areas as a positive development per se. The question that researchers and citizens alike face today is the following: more Europe to do what? Thus, we believe that only a critical analysis of the problematic aspects of integration can help reform the EU in a meaningful way that enables it to tackle the challenges of our era, namely inefficient collective responses to global warming, the rise of social inequalities, unmanaged migrations, the rise of nativist sentiment, the securitisation of societies and militarisation and the unravelling of democracy. Let us hope that the Corona virus pandemic, which hit as we went to press, will represent a break in the pattern of the EU's problematic responses to crisis over the past decade.

We, as editors of this volume, therefore believe that the EU can no longer be taught as it once was. Our first endeavour is to provide an up-to-date account of the transformations of the EU since the 2008 financial crisis while also moving away from the typical, seemingly neutral, account of the functioning of the EU which usually characterises textbooks. The structure of this book reflects the multiple facets of these transformations. The first part demonstrates that the crises have profoundly altered the EU political regime as it was designed by the Lisbon Treaty. It has also made some of our concepts and theories (for instance the opposition between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism) less and less effective in understanding the emerging paradoxical forms of integration which involve, in different ways, both more and less Europe. The second part deals extensively with



xiv Foreword

how EU policies have been reshaped in response to the crises and their limited success in tackling deficits of effectiveness and democratic accountability. The third part of this volume addresses overarching existential issues that are often absent from textbooks but are crucial to the present and future of the EU, namely socio-economic disparities, conflicting values and centrifugal tendencies towards disintegration linked to a deficit of democracy.

More importantly perhaps, this textbook aims at stimulating the readers' critical thinking towards the EU. The contributors to the volume are all leading scholars in European studies or/and cognate disciplines such as history, comparative politics, international relations or international political economy, and they reassess recent developments in the EU from a critical perspective. Our purpose is to provide undergraduate and graduate students with the necessary knowledge to understand not only how the EU works, but also what the political and social implications of integration are. For this purpose, the textbook includes a number of original pedagogical features which may help instructors emphasise problematic issues, contradictions and trade-offs. Every chapter can thus be used separately to focus on a given issue. While the boxes (including key dates, key actors, legal basis and key concepts) provide some systematic basic knowledge about the various topics, the chapters are framed as thought-provoking questions providing a thread for explaining a particular aspect of EU integration. Paradigmatic case studies at the end of each chapter are there to deepen a more specific aspect and illustrate an especially salient dimension of the past decade's multiple crises. Moreover, every chapter ends not only with references for further readings, but also with two types of questions to be used by instructors for in-class debates (questions for group discussion) and/or written assignments (topics for individual research). Understanding the complex workings of the EU (e.g. legal and institutional aspects, policy reforms) and how it relates to broader political developments at the national and global levels is challenging for students. In other words, they often find it difficult to connect the 'EU from the textbooks' and the 'EU from the news'. The perspectives provided by the authors, combined with the pedagogical features described above, aim to help students bridge this gap and strengthen their knowledge and opinions both as students and as citizens.

Ramona Coman, Amandine Crespy and Vivien A. Schmidt



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More Information

Chronology

Historical Milestones of EU Integration

- 1951 The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) is set up by the six countries (Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands Germany and France).
- 1957 The six founding members sign the Treaties of Rome, which create the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).
- 1973 The Communities expand to the north with three new members (Denmark, Ireland and the UK).
- 1979 The first direct elections to the European Parliament take place.
- 1981 Greece accedes to the Communities.
- 1986 The Communities enlarge further to the south (Spain and Portugal).
- 1992 The Treaty of Maastricht is signed. It introduces European citizenship, foresees the creation of a monetary union, establishes the European Parliament as a co-legislator and transforms the European Communities into the European Union.
- 1998 The European Central Bank is created. The French-British summit of Saint-Malo launches the European Security and Defence Policy.
- 2001 The Laeken Declaration sets up a Convention on the Future of Europe (composed of members from national governments and parliaments and from the EU institutions), entrusted with the task of drafting a constitution for the EU.
- 2002 The euro becomes the currency of twelve EU countries.
- 2004 The EU expands to ten new member states in Central and Eastern Europe (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia).
- 2005 The European Constitutional Treaty is rejected by referendum in France and the Netherlands.
- 2007 The eastern enlargement is completed with the accession of two new members (Bulgaria and Romania).
- 2007 The Treaty of Lisbon is signed. The Treaty establishing the European Community is renamed the 'Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union'. Essentially based on the innovations proposed in the European Constitutional Treaty, it rationalises the functioning of the EU institutions,



Chronology

xvii

- gives the EU full legal personality and grants the Charter of Fundamental Rights binding character.
- 2010 Due to skyrocketing debt levels in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, bailout packages are adopted for Greece and Ireland. Memorandums of Understanding between the EU, the International Monetary Fund and national governments impose conditionality, making loans dependent on drastic fiscal and social reforms. Portugal and Spain soon follow.
- 2012 The European Stability Fund is created as an international institution to grant financial assistance through loans to indebted eurozone member countries.
- 2013 Croatia becomes a member of the EU.
- 2016 A majority of British citizens vote in favour of an exit of the UK from the EU (Brexit).
- 2020 The United Kingdom leaves the European Union. The withdrawal agreement entered into force upon the UK's exit from the EU on 31 January 2020. The UK is no longer an EU member state and is considered a third country.



More Information

Glossary

- Absolute majority (in the European Parliament) An absolute majority is the majority of all members of the European Parliament (including those absent or not voting). In its present configuration with 705 MEPs, the threshold for an absolute majority is 354 votes.
- Citizens' initiative The citizens' initiative allows one million citizens from at least a quarter of EU member states to ask the European Commission to come up with proposals for new laws in fields in which it has competence.
- Co-decision Term previously used for what is now the ordinary legislative procedure. Still widely used unofficially.
- College of Commissioners The College is composed of twenty-seven European commissioners.
- Commissioner The European Commission is made up of commissioners, each of whom is assigned responsibility for a specific policy field by the president of the Commission. Currently, there are twenty-seven, one from each member state.
- Committee in the European Parliament
 The Europeans Parliament's (EP)
 twenty permanent committees draw
 up, amend and adopt legislative
 proposals, which are then voted on
 by the EP as a whole during plenary
 sessions. The political make-up of the
 committees reflects that of the EP. The

- EP can set up sub-committees, special temporary committees and formal committees of inquiry.
- Conciliation Conciliation is the third and final phase of the ordinary legislative procedure. It takes place when the EP and Council can't reach agreement on a legislative proposal during the first two readings. Delegations from the Council and the EP look for a compromise acceptable to both.
- Conciliation Committee The Conciliation
 Committee sits during the conciliation
 phase of the ordinary legislative
 procedure. It is composed of the same
 number of member state representatives
 and MEPs. The committee is
 responsible for drawing up a joint
 text, which is put to the Council and
 EP for approval at third reading. The
 European Commission takes part in its
 proceedings with a view to reconciling
 the differing positions.
- Conference of Committee Chairs The EP's
 Conference of Committee Chairs is
 composed of the chairs of all standing
 and temporary committees. Its task is
 to improve cooperation between EP
 committees.
- COREPER A Council committee made up of the permanent representatives of the member states, which prepares the work of the Council. COREPER I includes deputy ambassadors and COREPER II is made up of ambassadors.



Glossary xix

- Decision A 'decision' is binding on those to whom it is addressed (e.g. an EU country or an individual company) and is directly applicable.
- Directive A 'directive' is a legislative act setting a goal to be achieved by all EU countries, but leaving the method to each member state.
- EU law EU law is divided into 'primary' and 'secondary' legislation. The treaties (primary legislation) are the basis for all EU action. Secondary legislation, which includes regulations, directives and decisions, are derived from the principles and objectives set out in the treaties.
- Member of the European Parliament

 Members of the European Parliament
 (MEPs) are directly elected for a fiveyear period. The 705 MEPs represent
 EU citizens.
- Official Journal The Official Journal of the European Union (OJ) contains
 EU legislation, information, notices and preliminary legislative work. It is published each working day in all EU official languages. Only legal acts published in the OJ are binding.
- Official language There are twenty-four official EU languages: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish. All EU law is published in all official languages.
- Ordinary legislative procedure Under the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly co-decision) the European

- Parliament and the Council of the European Union decide jointly on Commission proposals on a wide range of areas (for example, economic governance, immigration, energy, transport, the environment and consumer protection). Most EU law is now adopted in this way.
- Plenary Parliament's plenary sessions take place twelve times a year in Strasbourg, with shorter plenaries in Brussels. Plenary brings together all MEPs to debate and vote on EU legislation and adopt a position on political issues.
- Political group MEPs are organised not by nationality, but by political affiliation. There are currently seven political groups in the EP. Members may belong to only one political group. Some MEPs do not belong to a political group and are known as non-attached members.
- Proportionality According to the principle of proportionality, the involvement of EU institutions must be limited to what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.
- Public consultation In public consultations the European Commission asks different stakeholders, such as public authorities, member state authorities, enterprises, (private) organisations, industry associations and citizens, to submit their views on intended legislation. It usually takes the form of a questionnaire with open and closed questions.
- Qualified majority in the Council A qualified majority in the Council corresponds to at least 55 per cent of



xx Glossary

the Council members (member states), comprising a minimum of 15 out of 27, representing at least 65 per cent of the EU population. A blocking minority may be formed by at least four Council members.

- Rapporteur An MEP, appointed by the parliamentary committee responsible for handling a legislative proposal, who will steer the proposal through the EP and will prepare a report on it.
- Regulation A 'regulation' is a directly applicable form of EU law, which has binding legal force in all member states. National governments do not have to take action to implement EU regulations.
- Right of initiative The Commission's right of initiative empowers it to make proposals either because the Treaties explicitly provide for it or because the Commission considers it necessary. The Council and EP may also ask the Commission to come up with proposals.
- Secretary general of the Council The head of the General Secretariat of the Council, which assists the Council and the European Council. With the president of the Council, they sign all acts adopted jointly by Parliament and Council.
- Secretary general of the European
 Parliament The EP's most senior
 official, responsible for its
 administration. They ensure the
 smooth running of parliamentary
 business under the leadership of the
 president and the Bureau. With the
 president, they verify and sign all acts
 adopted jointly by the EP and Council.

- Simple majority (in the EP) A proposal adopted by simple majority is approved if the number of 'yes' is higher than number of 'no' votes.
- Subsidiarity According to the subsidiarity principle, the EU should not act (except in areas that fall within its exclusive competence), unless EU action is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level. Constant checks are made to verify that EU-level action is justified.
- Treaties A treaty is a binding agreement between EU member countries. It sets out EU objectives, rules for EU institutions, how decisions are made and the relationship between the EU and its member countries.
- Treaty of Amsterdam The Treaty of
 Amsterdam came into force 1 May
 1999. Its purpose was to reform the
 EU institutions in preparation for the
 arrival of future member countries.
 It amended, renumbered and
 consolidated the EU and EEC treaties
 and increased the use of co-decision.
- Treaty of Lisbon The Lisbon Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009. It comprises the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU). The Lisbon Treaty gave more power to the EP, changed voting procedures in the Council, introduced the citizens' initiative, created a permanent president of the European Council, a new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and a new EU diplomatic service, and clarified which powers belong to the EU, which to EU member states and which are shared.



Glossary xxi

It changed the name of co-decision to the ordinary legislative procedure and increased the number of areas to which ordinary legislative procedure is applied.

Treaty of Maastricht The Treaty of
Maastricht, or the Treaty on
European Union, entered in to force
on 1 November 1993. It established
the EU (previously the European
Communities), and introduced codecision and cooperation between EU
governments on defence and justice
and home affairs. It paved the way
for Economic and Monetary Union
and introduced elements of a political
union (citizenship, a common foreign
and internal affairs policy).

Treaty of Nice The Treaty of Nice entered into force on 1 February 2003. Its purpose was to reform the institutions so that the EU could function efficiently after reaching twenty-five member countries. It introduced methods for changing the composition of the Commission and redefining the voting system in the Council.

Treaty on European Union The Maastricht Treaty, in force since 1993, was amended and renamed the Treaty on European Union by the Lisbon Treaty. It establishes the EU as legal entity, and defines its values, aims, institutions and competences. It is one of the two principal treaties on which the EU is now based.

Treaty on the Functioning of the
European Union The Treaty on the
Functioning of the European Union
(TFEU) started life as the Treaty
of Rome in 1958, but has since
been much amended. It sets out
the organisational and functional
details of the EU. It is one of the two
principal treaties on which the EU is
now based.

Trilogue Informal meetings attended by the EP, Council and Commission. Their purpose is to get an agreement (on a package of amendments or on the wording of laws) acceptable to the Council and EP.

Unanimity (in the Council) Unanimity requires all member states meeting within the Council to agree on a proposal before it can be adopted. Since the Lisbon Treaty only a restricted number of policies judged to be sensitive remain subject to unanimity voting.



More Information

Abbreviations

AFSJ Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

BGs Battle Groups

CAP Common Agricultural Policy

CETA Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

CF Cohesion Fund

CFSP Common Foreign and Security Policy

CISA Convention of 19 June 1990 implementing the Schengen Agreement

CJEU Court of Justice of the European Union
CSDP Common Security and Defense Policy

CSOs civil society organisations

CSRs Country-Specific Recommendations

DG ECFIN Directorate-General Economy and Finance

DG EMPL Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

EBCG European Border and Coast Guard Agency

EBRD European Bank of Reconstruction and Development

EC European Communities
ECB European Central Bank

ECSC European Coal and Steel Community
EEAS European External Action Service
EEC European Economic Community
EFSF European Financial Stability Facility

EIB European Investment Bank
EMU Economic and Monetary Union

EP European Parliament

ERDF European Regional Development Fund

ESF European Social Fund

ESM European Stability Mechanism

EU European Union

FDI foreign direct investment

GATT General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

IMF International Monetary FundNATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



List of Abbreviations xxiii

SEA Single European Act
SGP Stability and Growth Pact
TCNs third-country nationals
TEU Treaty on European Union

TFEU Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TTIP Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

