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# INTRODUCTION

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## *abstract*

*The introduction highlights the main themes of the papers published in the first section of the issue, which consider from various angles how the organisation of EU can respond to the present historical challenges, holding on to the fundamental values that inspired the unification. Some essays discuss in which way EU could obtain a more accomplished legitimation and a stronger integration, and how EU citizenship should be adequately implemented. Other essays focus on the political implication of solidarity within EU, on possible inadequacies in the economic organization of EU and the role of Germany within EU.*

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## *keywords*

*European Union, citizenship, solidarity, monetary union, Germany*

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What's the matter with Europe? It is an odd question to open a session of contributions by specialists on Europe and our future. We say 'our' future – we, the people, we would say... – as Europe is not to be a philosophical topic unless it becomes firstly a matter of all those who live under European institutions, within European territory, coping with all the inconsistencies that are under everyone's eyes. Right now we are living the tragedy of Greece, the dilemmas caused by the masses of migrants knocking at our doors, the menace of terrorism: problems that seem unresolvable, even unbearable, since we gaze at them hopelessly, unenthusiastically, even hostilely. Willingly or unwillingly these questions are our matter, we cannot put them aside. Indeed, they are urgent matters for every European citizen. Thus we should make an effort to distinguish the several aspects of each one.

Jürgen Habermas focuses his analysis on the structural nature of the current problematic state of the European Union. In Habermas' view, the financial crisis and the pressing social issues both within Europe and in other regions close to Europe make apparent that the main weakness of the European Union lies in a democratic deficit, that is, in an incomplete or insufficient fulfillment of the European unification. A stronger legitimation of the European institutions cannot be achieved, according to Habermas, merely by widening the competencies of the European Parliament. Institutions alone cannot give a decisive impulse to overcome the present issues. The European integration has to be further developed, and the European Union must become a full-fledged supranational democracy. This result can be achieved, in Habermas' view, by centering the unification process on a double sovereignty, uniting the European citizen and the citizen of the national States as constituent subjects. Drawing on this foundation, the European Union would both safeguard the results achieved by the national States and fill the legitimation gap.

Stressing a point already mentioned by Habermas, Jean-Luc Ferry observes that the course of history after 1989, characterized by a different framework of international relations with the former Soviet Union, affects also the function of the European Union, since its original purpose, namely to guarantee peace within the continent after the two world wars, seemed now to be of only secondary significance. Because of the drastically changed historical conditions, Ferry argues that the present challenges require Europe to play a role that demands not a merely administrative approach, but has to include a genuinely philosophical element. Thereby, Europe would correct the imperfect transition that Ferry sees in the path taken by the building process of the EU, namely the transition between philosophical ideals and realism of the realization, centred on economical and administrative issues. Here the

normative dimension of the European project in its current terms takes centre stage. In explicit contrast with the assumption that the scientific and philosophical approach has to be descriptive in nature, Ferry maintains that a “critical hermeneutics” would have the role to highlight the main points of convergence and guidelines that the new development of the European Union should follow. Now, Ferry argues, the present tasks suggest that Europe should focus on a new purpose, which he sees in the challenge of globalization. Along with this fundamental aim, Europe should hold on to the acknowledged values of the European space, products of specific moments of the history of European culture, and to the juridical structure of a well-ordered co-sovereignty, alternative to both national sovereignty and supranational federalism. Besides these achievements, Ferry stresses the necessity of a shared memory, which should be gained through what he calls a “reconstructive ethics”. Nadia Urbinati and Rainer Bauböck deal with more pragmatic issues like citizenship and inclusion, here discussed from different angles. In her paper “The Joined Destiny of Migration and European Citizenship”, Urbinati focuses on the dramatic question of European citizenship: it is dramatic as a lot of migrants act as the testing ground for the European project of transforming “the ideal of cosmopolitan citizenship into a reality”. To answer this, Urbinati starts by disputing the very idea of citizenship, challenging the traditional understanding of it as an extension of citizenship beyond the State. The usual link between “nationhood” and “citizenship” has to be put under scrutiny. Recalling the Kantian lesson, Urbinati reminds the reader of the freedom of movement as the basis of an ideal of peaceful cosmopolitan order. At the European level, the freedom of movement has been firstly conceived according to the State members’ economic concerns; then, it evolved toward the construction of a political citizenship made of a constellation of civil and political rights attached to individuals. The process implied in this construction does not necessarily lead the European Union toward a democratic integration. At this aim this right should be interpreted not only as a right to exit but also as a right to enter, in order to create a legal space in which the right to movement could be symmetrical, thus a perfect right. The political development of the European Union beyond economic interdependence and the construction of a European citizenship must be promoted and implemented, not merely desired. Urbinati correctly emphasizes that immigration and mass migration are challenging the vision of European citizenship as it could spring from a spontaneous process: the author highlights the need for political institutions at a European level, as is all the more evident from the fact that the question of migration is not merely one of border security or economics. It is properly a matter of configuration of citizenship and the identity of European Union. In Arendtian terms, the need is to disentangle citizenship and the right to have rights. Immigrants and migrants make a request for political rights as human beings: what they claim to is a supranational and cosmopolitan citizenship.

To sum it up, we dare integrate Urbinati’s thoughts by saying that there are at least two opposing tendencies at work, each of which is affiliated with a specific vision of Europe and endorsed by specific political actors. The first tendency is the one that sees the European Union developing as a big area of free trade and exchange and which is coupled with a vision rejecting any further institutional integration process. The second tendency points towards a new stage of the integration aiming at obtaining a European citizenship as independent from national belongings.

In his essay Bauböck argues that most writing about Union citizenship tends to compare it to nation State citizenship. It is a mistake and it explains why the current construction of European citizenship is internally incoherent, not sufficiently inclusive, and lacking in democratic legitimacy. According to the author, European Union citizenship represents a hybrid type. When asking who are the citizens of the European Union, the answer is the nationals of the European Union Member States. Individual membership in the European

Union polity is determined neither by a European Union birthright, nor by residence in the European Union, but is derivative of Member State nationality. A utopian vision would abolish birthright citizenship even at the level of the European supranational State: some theorists have argued from a cosmopolitan perspective that birthright citizenship serves to maintain a globally unjust distribution of resources and opportunities. They would replace birthright citizenship with a rule that in every polity all those who are long-term residents will be counted as citizens. Bauböck declares not to be persuaded by this argument for some reasons. Among these, he finds it difficult to imagine how democratic political communities could be formed and maintained without assurances of trans-generational continuity provided by birthright membership. But in a hypothetical world where most people are migrants living outside their countries of origin for most of their lives, maintaining birthright membership would amount to establishing a tyranny of sedentary minorities over mobile majorities. Considerations of social justice that support public systems of education, health, and welfare based on redistributive taxation would find little popular support, and democratic participation would be reduced to a small politically-interested elite. The need for belonging to associations with birthright membership would then not vanish completely, but would probably be articulated through the formation of non-territorial associations based on religion, class, or ethnicity.

A more critical approach characterizes the essay of Alberto Bagnai, who aims at highlighting some fundamental paradoxes affecting the very structure of the European Union in its current organization. Bagnai argues that the currency union is not only insufficient, but ultimately impairing the economic efficiency of the Eurozone. While other essays have pointed out that the main political aim underlying the project of a European Union must now be considered superseded by other needs arising from the drastically changed historical situation, Bagnai emphasizes that the economic issues that the European Union project was designed to respond to do not correspond to the present circumstances. Drawing on these remarks, Bagnai is very critical both of the European institutions and of the European left-wing parties, which, in his view, have lost sight of the proper parameters of social justice. Left-wing parties endorsing pro-capital policies and supranationalism deployed to overcome nationalism are the two main paradoxes that, on Bagnai's analysis, have a damaging impact on the present development of European institutions.

The role of Germany within the European Union is one of the most controversial issues in the current debates, and is accordingly touched upon in many essays. However, only the remarks of Angelo Bolaffi are directly devoted to a discussion of this central topic. According to Bolaffi, one of the elements characterizing the present phase of the history of Europe is the re-unified German State. The transition from the Cold War order to the post-1989 situation gave Germany a new role, charged with special responsibilities. Responding to widespread doubts concerning the position of Germany within the European Union, Bolaffi maintains that what should be feared is not Germany's power, but only its weakness. Against the idea of a federal union, which Bolaffi regards as impracticable, Germany should be regarded as the political and administrative paradigm to be followed and further implemented, in order to safeguard welfare, social justice, and economic efficiency.

Pluralism, identity, differences are the recurrent words of the present contributions: in his essay on "Europe or Philosophy" Massimo Cacciari wonders whether 'this' Europe is at least evoking the philosophical complexity of the notion of Europe. For instance, according to the author, talks of preserving Europe's identity imply a tragic amnesia of Europe's constitutional difference. Europe is a *Topos-Atopos*, a place without place, without a map of cultures, languages, ethnicities, as it exists as a paradoxical entity. Specifically, in the face of global migration flows, attempts to think of a European nation-State with borders make no sense.

Now, just when we were thinking we had reached the threshold of the political unity, opposing forces, prejudices and aversions of all kinds – theoretical and practical, philosophical and political – are getting the better. But these opposites are endemic and Europe hosts opposites from the beginning. We are discovering that the attempt to reduce this tension of opposites, the will to impose a union to the opposites is a sort of original violence. Perhaps the only way of redemption is to be found in the acknowledgement of differences and even conflicts, instead of coercing these into a single, unrealistic entity.