

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT: PRELIMINARY REMARKS

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The European Union appears, in the context of a conceptual and transformational change, in the shape of a fluid structure, as it is continuously shaped by a wide variety of factors. Under the current redefining process, the scientific literature usually focuses on the social, political and economic forces, while the present article is attempting to pursue the stance and amplitude of the social force in the Union's configuration.

The EU can be currently viewed as a reality found at crossroads, in the conditions of a growing fragility of public support for European integration and the increasing contestation of the EU through the amplification of Eurosceptic attitudes and the rising popularity of the populist-nationalist parties that brought the attention toward the state and its primordial character.

This article represents an attempt to provide a preliminary insight on the forces that shape the configuration of this supranational structure, with regard to the factors that are accountable for the growing scepticism among the European citizens and have translated the citizens' approach on the EU from a permissive consensus to a constraining dissensus.

When evaluating the issue of public attitudes towards the European integration project it would be interesting to study the effects of the social implications of the EU. The European Union, through its policy and directions of development, has maintained a strong redistributive role at an international level. As European integration has created new forms of competition, it also produced new redistributive flows and, at the same time, new forms of inequality. Following this logic, the process of European integration has divided

its citizens into winners and losers of integration.

It can be argued that the redistributive role of the EU creates a so-called economic discrimination among its citizens, as it deepens the existing cleavages and produces new ones on an economic basis. Whereas inequality remains a reality at a national level, the EU tends to accentuate a new type of transnational inequality. That is, the poorer social categories living in the more developed member-states will be discriminated by favouring the underdeveloped populations living inside poorer member states.

A question that can reside from this is if the EU is capable of managing its contrasting members in order to bring them on equal footing or if it will only manage to perpetuate the present state of affairs, mainly seen as a two-speed Europe.