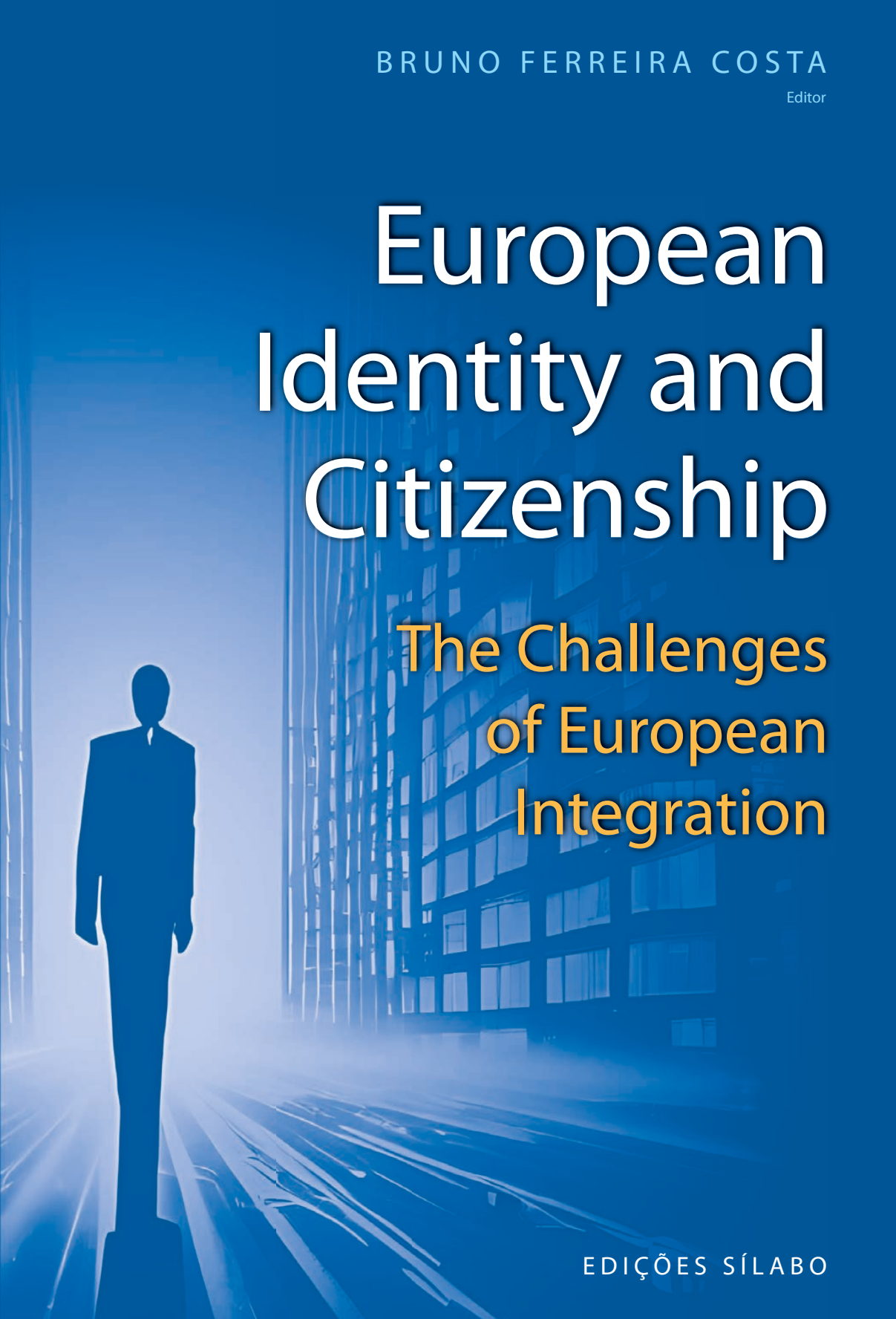
BRUNO FERREIRA COSTA
Editor

European Identity and Citizenship

The Challenges of European Integration



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2023-03-20

European Identity and Citizenship

The Challenges of European Integration

Bruno Ferreira Costa
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Title: European Identity and Citizenship – The Challenges of European Integration
Authors: Bruno Ferreira Costa and others
© Edições Sílabo, Lda.
Cover: Pedro Mota

1st Edition – Lisbon, March 2023.
Printing and binding: ARTIPOL – Artes Tipográficas, Lda.
Legal Deposit: 512791/23
ISBN: 978-989-561-299-4

EDIÇÕES SÍLABO, Lda.
Publicamos conhecimento

Editor: Manuel Robalo

R. Cidade de Manchester, 2
1170-100 Lisboa
Tel.: 218130345
e-mail: silabo@silabo.pt
www.silabo.pt

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«The world needs our leadership more than ever. To keep engaging with the world as a responsible power. To be a force for peace and for positive change»

Ursula Von der Leyen[1]

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2023-03-20

(1) Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/speech_19_6408. Consulted on August 20, 2022.

Introduction

This publication is the result of the organization of an intensive course (blended intensive program) dedicated to the theme of European citizenship and identity at University of Beira Interior. This project, embedded in the Erasmus Program and the UNITA European Alliance (which brings together six Universities – Universidade da Beira Interior, Università degli studi di Torino, Universidad de Zaragoza, Université Savoie-Mont Blanc, Universitatea de Vest din Timişoara and Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour) aims to allow for reflection, debate and deepening of knowledge about the European Union, also providing a relevant intercultural matrix. In fact, the European project should allow for the sharing of experiences that deepen the feeling of belonging to the European Union, with the 2022 edition having 35 students.

The course (carried out in person and online) focused on 6 fundamental areas: the history of the European project; the values associated with the European Union; the issue of human rights; EU's role in the world; the issue of refugees and a prospective aspect, considering the future of the European Union.

This work counts on the contribution of professors of the mentioned course, representing a contribution/pedagogical resource for the next editions and for all those interested in European themes.

The manual is divided into 9 chapters, reflecting a set of topics and subtopics covered throughout the course «European Identity and Citizenship – Challenges of the European Integration».

In the first chapter, by Corina Turşie, the history of the European Union is addressed, with a special focus on periods of crisis, as well as a reflection on how the EU was able to overcome these obstacles to assert itself as a pole of world development.

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The second chapter, authored by Giovanna Schlink and Pedro Silveira, presents the main institutions of the European Union, as well as the relationship established between them, being a decisive contribution to understanding the organizational dynamics of the EU and the decision processes adopted in the context of European policies.

In the third chapter, by Paulo Vila Maior, the values that underlie the European project are analyzed, with special emphasis on the analysis of populist movements (left and right) rise in the context of the European project.

The fourth chapter, authored by Liliana Reis, focuses on the analysis of the role of the European Union in the global context, both in the diplomatic domain and in the area of defense, with special emphasis on the importance of the Lisbon Treaty for the affirmation of a set of roles on the international political scene.

The fifth chapter, by Guilherme Marques Pedro, returns to the period of the 2008 economic crisis, in order to address the relationship between religious and economic beliefs in the context of secular Europe. This is a contribution on whether «Protestant austerity» could jeopardize one of the fundamental values of the European project – European solidarity.

In the sixth chapter, written by Catarina Sales de Oliveira, the issue of the mobility of refugees and migrants in the Portuguese case is addressed, which is one of the central themes in terms of building the European project, both because of the opposing positions and the reception policy, as well as the consequences of migratory flows in the continent.

In the seventh chapter, authored by Inna Ivanivna Matiushyna, a reflection on the European dimension of Ukraine is presented. After the presentation of Ukraine's candidacy to the European Union, it seems important, in fact, to reflect and address the cultural and historical matrix of the country, in a path of approximation to the European partners triggered by the Orange Revolution, in 2014.

The eighth chapter, authored by Denys Lifintsev, presents a more practical aspect of the course taught at UBI, namely the potential of cross-communication between peoples with distinct identities and cultures. The European space is fertile ground for this approach, a

meeting point for multiple cultures and a space for dialogue between citizens of different origins and beliefs.

The last chapter, by Bruno Ferreira Costa, focuses on the reflection concerning the main challenges that guide the construction of the European project, namely the challenges associated with contemporaneity, in a way of affirming the European project in a context of high international instability.

The project of this work stems, essentially, from two central objectives: to place in a pedagogical dimension a set of central themes to understand the functioning of the European Union and the main challenges to the European project and to ensure a platform for the dissemination of injured content in the context of the aforementioned course, in a way that aims to ensure the opening of the University to civil society.

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Chapter 1

The construction of the European Union

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2023-03-20

1.1. Introduction

This chapter is about the construction of the European Union (EU), the most ambitious and advanced example of international cooperation. It represents today one of the world's largest and most competitive market and it brought to its citizens the longest period of peace, in a part of the world once tormented by nationalisms and wars. It impacts the everyday lives of European citizens through the extensive acquis of European legislation, it represents an area of free movement of people, goods, services, and capital, since the Member States have progressively removed barriers between them, and it has a core of shared democratic values, promoted both internally and in third countries.

Despite these achievements, there is no unanimous voice regarding the benefits of the European integration and the future of the European Union. During the last eight decades of European integration, several crises marked the trajectory of European construction and voices rushed up the announcement of the project end. Especially the last twenty years were characterized by a series of fast succeeding crises that have cast shadows over the future of the European Union. The approach of this chapter is based on the idea that the European integration, in the *longue durée*, has been built on a succession of crises, highlighting the dichotomy: crisis-accomplishment. Crises did not produce the end of European construction, as expected in the heat of the moment, but each of them brought a specific advancement of the integration project. One of its founding fathers, Jean Monnet, warned, in his *Memoirs*, that Europe 'would be built through crises' and would be 'the sum of their solutions' (Monnet, 1978, *apud* McCormick, 2021, xvii). A selection of prominent crises will be briefly discussed.

1.2. Key concepts

- **European Union** – an organization of regional integration, having a mix of supranational and intergovernmental institutions and different decision-making procedures, in policy areas with different degrees of integration.

- **European Integration** – a process of sovereignty transfer from the Member States to the EU institutions, in an ever-growing number of policy areas (deepening) agreed by an ever-growing number of member states (widening).
- **Crisis** – a problem in need for a solution, which can mark a critical challenge at a decisive point in time, by opening a window of opportunity for institutional and policy changes.

1.3. The European Union

1.3.1. What is the European Union?

At the heart of the debate about European construction is the question of how to define it best. The EU is more than an international organization but less than a state. It has all the characteristics of an international organization: it is a body based on voluntary membership; the members are states – 27 at present; it has a constitutive act – from the founding Treaties to the Lisbon Treaty; it has an institutional structure for communal management and joint decision-making – the EU has currently seven official institutions; and it is being financed by members' contributions.

In the case of the EU, it overpasses the characteristics of an international organization in two focal points: first, it has a unique institutional framework, mixing intergovernmental institutions – the Council, the European Council, with supranational ones – the Commission and the European Parliament; second, its budget does not reside only in members' contribution (part of states' GDP and collected VAT) but it also has its own resources (custom taxes from commerce with third countries).

Also, it is less than a state, understood as a free-standing legal and political entity with three essential features: population, territory and sovereignty.

First, the EU has indeed a population of 450 million citizens, who are called, since the Maastricht Treaty, European citizens, a statute

complementary to their national citizenship. But do they feel Europeans? Are they loyal to the European Union?

Eurobarometer data show diverse levels of trust in the EU among nationals of diverse EU Member States (Figure 1). 47% of Europeans tend to trust the European Union, with higher levels of trust in Portugal – 69% or Romania – 49% and lower levels in France – 32%. National political contexts could explain the inter-state variations. Also, recent EU Member States traditionally register higher levels of trust in the EU than older ones.

Figure 1. Trust in the European Union (Standard Eurobarometer 96 winter 2021-2022)

QA6b.10 How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?
The European Union (%)

	Tend to trust		Tend not to trust		Don't know
	Win.21/22	Diff Win.21/22 - Sp.2021	Win.21/22	Diff Win.21/22 - Sp.2021	Win.21/22
EU27	47	-2	44	2	9
EURO AREA	45	-3	45	1	10
NON-EURO AREA	52	-2	40	3	8
BE	46	-7	51	4	3
BG	48	-7	37	8	15
CZ	50	1	50	3	0
DK	61	0	37	3	2
DE	48	1	43	-1	9
EE	63	0	37	0	0
IE	63	-8	25	-4	12
EL	39	3	59	-3	2
ES	45	-9	41	4	14
FR	32	-4	56	6	12
HR	48	-3	46	2	6
IT	45	-4	46	2	9
CY	46	1	48	2	6
LV	50	-5	38	0	12
LT	59	-10	29	-2	12
LU	43	-5	53	7	4
HU	58	2	37	-2	5
MT	61	-1	28	4	11
NL	54	5	39	-10	7
AT	42	-3	51	6	7
PL	53	-2	37	5	10
PT	69	-4	26	8	5
RO	49	-7	40	5	11
SI	50	-5	45	4	5
SK	43	0	47	0	10
FI	52	-2	40	-6	8

Second, the territory of the European Union is composed by the national territories of all 27 Member States. Nevertheless, there are different types of borders in the EU, encompassing different levels of policy integration. The 1985 Schengen agreement has created an area of freedom of movement without border controls. By moving the control to the exterior borders of the area, the EU shares a state-type feature – having external borders harder than the interior ones. Still, not all EU member states are part of the Schengen area. The difficulty to reach the political unanimity necessary to extend the Schengen area to other states makes non-Schengen states experience the unwanted status of second-order EU members.

Third, in terms of sovereignty, and this is the most important distinction between the EU and a state, the EU does not have sovereignty in itself: it has only the powers conferred to it by the Treaties, as negotiated by the states. Sovereignty means *supremacy and independence: supremacy* in internal affairs – there is no superior power to state power, which has legitimacy to take decisions in all policy fields; and *independence* in external affairs – a state decides upon its external policy. In comparison, the EU has various degrees of competence in diverse policy fields, as stated in art. 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Figure 2).

Some policies are more integrated and decided upon at the EU level – market policies, single currency, competition policy – while others are less integrated, being elaborated by Member States at national level, and they are just being supported by the EU through specific financing programs – education policy (such as the Erasmus+ program) or cultural policy (such as Creative Europe program or the European Capital of Culture award). EU has also special competences, in policy fields freely coordinated by it, while Member States are the main actors: common foreign and security policy, coordination of economic, social and employment policies.

EDITOR

Bruno Ferreira Costa. He was born in Avintes, Vila Nova de Gaia, and is currently an assistant professor at the University of Beira Interior. He holds a Degree, Master, and Ph.D. in Political Science from the Institute of Social and Political Sciences (University of Lisbon). He develops research at Praxis – Center for Philosophy, Politics, and Culture (PRAXIS-UBI) in political systems and political participation, quality of democracy, political communication, and European integration.

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This work constitutes a valuable contribution to the study of citizenship and European integration, with the participation of 10 researchers from Portugal, Romania, and Ukraine. The multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach is one of the ways to understand European Union dynamics and to reinforce the study of the European project's main challenges.

The work addresses the historical and institutional aspects of the European Union, emphasizing the theme of populism in the EU, the role of the EU in the global context, the security issue, the integration of migrants/refugees, the cultural aspect, and a chapter on Ukraine's European identity. From a pedagogical perspective, the book constitutes a fundamental instrument for political science, international relations, and European studies students to deepen their knowledge of these themes. At a time marked by profound changes in the political and international sphere, it is important to connect the European project foundations and the challenges of our society.

The book is, therefore, relevant support for teachers and researchers with responsibilities in these domains and represents an added value to all those interested in deepening their vision of Europe.

Com o apoio:

Funded by the European Union

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ISBN 978-989-561-299-4