

THINK TANKS' THOUGHTS

Europe's People's Forum has selected various think tanks' articles focused on themes that we find most current and interesting for the activists, politicians and connoisseurs engaged in the policies of the European Union. The articles were published in the first half of September.

EU's Future Institutional Structure and Policies

In his article [Germany and the Future of the Eurozone](#) (Carnegie Europe), the Former Greek Minister of Finance and Economy Yannis Papantoniou points out that the German scepticism towards Keynesian economic policy and insistence on top-down austerity measures has prolonged the economic crisis in Europe compared to the United States of America. He calls for a revision of the Stability and Growth Pact and believe that a renewed German-French collaboration could lead to a more flexible fiscal policy that does not support a Germany First approach.

In the paper [Hamilton's Paradox Revisited: Alternative lessons from US history](#) (CEPS), Waltraud Schelkle compares the parallel development of financial and fiscal union in the US followed by the monetary union after its constitution had been adopted with the Euro area's establishment of a common currency ahead of fiscal and financial integration. The author concludes that the Euro area's sequencing has the potential for a large systemic crisis in order to conclude about the best sequencing to avoid economic crises. Schelkle discusses the capacity of federations to create incentives for fiscal discipline and concludes that, despite all their different degrees of completion, the two unions – US and EU –are surprisingly alike.

EU-policies on Social Dimension, Labour Market Protections and Trade Agreements

In his article [Social Europe is back on the agenda but there is no big breakthrough](#) (FEPS), Björn Hacker analyses European Commission's final proposals for the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Reflection Paper on the EU's social dimension. While he praised the European Commission for having put social affairs back on the EU agenda after years spent focusing only on economic aspects, Hacker finds the Commission's proposals inadequate both in terms of their scope and level. The author suggests some steps to take in order to establish a true European Social Model.

Democracy, Citizens, Human Rights and Independence of Media

In his article [Europe and its discontents: Poland's collision course with the European Union](#)

(ECFR), Piotr Buras conducts a comprehensive analysis of the positions of the Law and Justice Party (PiS) government. Despite the fact that during its membership of EU Poland has had very significant economic progress and a large majority of its population is in favour of EU membership, the Polish government has taken a de-Europeanisation approach to economic, political, security, defence and foreign policy and is in direct conflict with EU on the values of liberal democracy. Buras concludes that the government must change its political position towards EU very soon or face that it risks being left behind a fast developing integration in Europe.

In their article [Defending EU Values in Poland and Hungary](#) (Carnegie Europe), Heather Grabbe and Stefan Lehne underline the importance of joint European values of democracy, rule of law and independent media for open economic collaboration and political integration. While the Commission has seriously criticised the illiberal development in Poland and Hungary, the member states remain still reluctant to criticise their peers. The two authors stress that while the European Commission has done its job by using a “consistent legal approach”, the Council of Ministers has to step in and give its political support.

Policies on Migrants and Refugees, Schengen and Development Aid

On the 27th of August, seven African and European countries met in Paris to discuss ways to stem the flow of refugees and migrants into Europe. The joint declaration focused on the need of local economic development and finding a solution to the root causes of illegal migration. While in the article [Still wanted: New approaches to migration for Europe](#) (ECFR) Andrew Lebovich stresses the fact that the joint declaration still uses a security-based approach to the issue, fails to understand smuggling economies and avoid to elaborate deeper strategies, Tim Eaton and Paul Melly focus on [Europe's Flawed Thinking on Mediterranean Migration](#) (Chatham House). The authors put the numbers regarding the migration flows in perspective and emphasise on the need to focus on long-term development of the transit countries.

[Italy's new policy on migration from Libya: will it last?](#) (Aspenia Institute) Mattia Toaldo analyses Italy's drastic policy shift on migration coming through Libya as proposed by the Italian Minister of Interior Marco Minniti. The new elements of the “Minniti compact” include: 1) an agreement with the armed groups to stop immigrants passing through the major hubs of people smuggling; 2) the establishment of a Libyan SAR; 3) the drastic reduction of NGO's S&R operations seen as *de facto* humanitarian channels into Europe; 4) deeper cooperation with Libya's southern tribes and with Nigeria and Chad in order to stop the flow of people from these two countries. Besides domestic political reasons, Toaldo believes that the new Italian approach will have consequences for the balance of power in Libya and for the intra-EU member states relationships. He illustrates three alternative options to the “Minniti compact” which might more positively impact the European migration policy as a whole.

[Pathways towards Legal Migration into the EU: Reappraising concepts, trajectories and policies](#) (CEPS) is an extremely comprehensive book edited by Sergio Carrera, Andrew

Geddes, Elspeth Guild and Marco Stefan which contains a consistent number of detailed articles analysing EU migration policies. The book includes a set of recommendations for the elaboration of policies which facilitate legal channels for labour mobility.

Priorities and Values in EU Foreign and Security Policy

The EU's involvement in Palestine through its collaboration with the Palestinian Authority (PA) is part of an analysis carried out by Saleh Hijazi and Hugh Lovatt, in their article [Issa Amro and the EU's Palestinian Authority problem](#) (ECFR). They analyse the case of the Palestinian human right defender Issa Amro, who has been arrested by PA officials after having criticized the PA in a social media post.¹ The arrest has been defined by Amnesty International a "shameless attack on freedom of expression". Hijazi and Lovatt, argue that EU leaders partially are responsible of the increasing PA's authoritarianism. As the largest donor to PA, the EU still fails to ensure the respect of human rights, and provide stronger support to a democratisation process as a first step for a Palestinian state without Israeli occupation.

In the policy brief titled [ACP-EU relations beyond 2020: Engaging the future or perpetuating the past?](#) (ECDPM) J. Bossuyt, N. Keijzer, A. Medinilla, A. Sherriff, G. Laporte, and M. Tollenaere, analyse how the EU could further develop its relationship with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States after the expiration of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) in 2020. The authors enumerate the disruptors that have eroded the ACP-EU partnership and argue that the EU seems unwilling to adapt the CPA to the new geopolitical realities but only aims at proposing the so-called 'umbrella scenario' promoted by DEVCO and EEAS. In the article they offer alternatives that could "modernise the partnership –particularly regarding Africa – in line with 21st century geopolitical realities, new global agendas and evolving EU external action practices".

In his article [European Policy in Asia: Getting Past Mercatorism and Mercantilism](#) (CER), Ian Bond questions EU's attitude towards the Asia-Pacific region, especially regarding security issues. The author individuates two main reasons: the distorted perception of distances, which chance EU perspective towards Asia, and the mercantile perspective, with makes EU countries afraid to challenge Asian powers when it comes to regional security challenges. Bond argues that while the EU cannot challenge US's military role in Asia, it has to act united and make China aware that the existence of shared economic interests cannot prevent EU to take a stance against China on security issues.

Brexit Negotiations and National Political Issues

In his discussion paper [Brexit: Dealing with withdrawal symptoms](#) (EPC), Andrew Duff focuses on the detailed considerations on the three key issues – citizens' rights, the financial

¹ Amro has been released on 10th of September but still faces charges by both Israel and the PA.

settlement and the Irish question. Firstly, as far as concerns citizens' rights, Duff explains it is a critical issue how to put the governance and judiciary in place – whether through the European Court of Justice or the UK courts or a joint committee or other solutions. Secondly, the financial settlement remains an open and unsolved issue, but Duff suggests that the UK should decide to stay in the MFF until 2021. Thirdly, Duff explains that the Irish question has significant implications for the UK's future role in relation to EU's customs' union and the fact it is prioritised by both sides does not make it easier to solve. The author also finds that the Remainers have one major problem: if by hook or by crook they destroy the current Article 50 process, there will be no second chance. The EU is preparing to leave the UK behind at midnight on 29 March 2019. In the absence of an Article 50 treaty there will be no looking back.