

THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

DEMISTING THE DEBATE

First published in 2020

Typesetting and design © Book Distributors Limited

© The Institute for European Studies, University of Malta

europeanstudies@um.edu.mt; www.um.edu.mt/europeanstudies

ISBN: 978-9918-21-032-9

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying without the permission obtained in writing of the Institute for European Studies of the University of Malta. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be addressed to the Institute for European Studies. This book may not be circulated in any other binding, format or cover and the same conditions are imposed on anyone who acquires the book from third parties. The Institute for European Studies can be reached at the University of Malta, Tal-Qroqq, Msida MSD 2080, Malta and contact details can also be found at <https://www.um.edu.mt/europeanstudies>.

Suggested citation:

Harwood, M., Moncada, S., Pace, R., (eds), 2020. *The Future of the European Union - Demisting the Debate*. Institute for European Studies: Malta

THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

DEMISTING THE DEBATE

Mark Harwood | Stefano Moncada | Roderick Pace (Eds.)

Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Notes on Contributors	8
<i>Editors</i>	8
Foreword	13
<i>European Integration's Extended Gestation: Forever Half-Pregnant</i>	13
Introduction	19
<i>Europe's Lifelong Companion? The Debate on the Future of Europe</i>	19
Part 1: Remodelling the European Union	27
Chapter One	
Decoupling and Federalizing: Europe after the Multiple Crises	
<i>Sergio Fabbrini</i>	28
Chapter Two	
Portrait of a Union: Redrawing a Sketch of the Whole	
<i>Dimitris N. Chrysochoou</i>	42
Chapter Three	
The Future of the EU in Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union Speeches	
<i>Jean Claude Cachia</i>	56
Chapter Four	
The Future of Europe: The View from Strasbourg	
During the 'Future of Europe' Debate	
<i>Mark Harwood</i>	78
Part 2: Europe in the World	95
Chapter Five	
The EU's Role in the World Trading System	
<i>Richard W.T. Pomfret</i>	96
Chapter Six	
The Arab Spring and the Post-Arab Spring (2011–19):	
An Assessment of the European Response	
<i>Bichara Khader</i>	108

Part 3: Security Challenges	127
Chapter Seven	
The Future of European Security and Defence: Keeping the Americans in? <i>Valentina Cassar</i>	128
Chapter Eight	
The Future of EU Defence and inter-Parliamentary Co-operation <i>Roderick Pace</i>	147
Chapter Nine	
EU Cybersecurity Governance – Stakeholders and Normative Intentions towards Integration <i>Agnes Kasper</i>	166
Chapter Ten	
Towards a ‘Cyber Maastricht’: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back <i>Agnes Kasper & Vlad Alex Vernygora</i>	186
Part 4: Common European Asylum System (CEAS)	211
Chapter Eleven	
The Steps from Dublin III to Dublin IV <i>Amelia Martha Matera</i>	212
Chapter Twelve	
EU Integration and Policy (In)coherence towards Irregular Migration <i>Nadia Petroni</i>	230
Index	242

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the authors who contributed to the book as well as those who provided a blind review of the chapters, namely Joe Burton, Marcello Carammia, Andre' P. DeBattista, Daniel Fiott, Kostas Ifantis, Daniella Irrera, Derek Lutterbeck, Susanna Thede, Michael J. Tsinisizeli, and Mario Thomas Vassallo. We would also like to thank Stefan Bezzina, and all the academic and administrative staff at the Institute for European Studies for their continuous support, and the University of Malta for having provided us with the working environment and the resources to finalise this publication.

Notes on Contributors

Editors

Mark Harwood is a Senior Lecturer in comparative politics at the University of Malta and Director of the Institute for European Studies. He has previously worked for the European Commission and the Maltese Government. Harwood's primary areas of interest are Europeanization, Malta's membership of the EU, and lobbying. His recent publications include 'Democratisation without Coercion: Parliamentary Bodies as Democracy Promoters in the Mediterranean' in *Parliamentary Affairs*, 'Bucking the Trend: How Malta Turned its back on Euroscepticism' in *The Future of Europe* (2019, Routledge, edited by Pollack, J.; Schmidt, P.; Kaeding, M) and 'Malta' in *Lobbying in Europe. Public Affairs and the Lobbying Industry in 28 EU Countries* (2017, Palgrave, edited by Bitonti, A. and Harris, P).

Stefano Moncada (twitter @stefanomocada) was born in Rome in 1976. He obtained his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Malta, where he lectures and conducts research in the areas of development economics, climate change, European studies, island studies, sustainable development, and impact evaluation techniques. Stefano's recent research activities include economic and health assessments, in the face of climate change, of communities in Africa and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Prior to joining academia, Stefano worked in the Italian Parliament as manager and policy analyst. He also worked as a consultant in several development projects based in Albania, Mexico, Mali and Ethiopia, mainly in relation to socio-economic, health, and environmental funded activities. He has worked with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) as senior research officer, where he was in charge of the development of impact assessment tools. Stefano is also a member of the board of the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta, and part of the Executive Committee of the European Association of Development and Training Institutes (EADI), of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), and acts as expert reviewer for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). He is active in numerous outreach and knowledge-transfer initiatives, including training courses and consultation sessions for public, private, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Professor Roderick Pace is a resident academic staff member of the Institute for European Studies at the University of Malta. His research interests are in world politics and the EU, small states, Euro-Mediterranean relations, the international

relations aspects of migration, and theories of European Integration. He has been a member of the editorial board of the Journal for South European Society and Politics since 2009, and a Jean Monnet Chair holder. His most recent publications include (2019) Malta and the European Union in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of European Union Politics*. Edited by Finn Laursen (Chief Editor). April. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1114; and co-author with Marcello Carammia. “Malta: Unstoppable Labour?” in Lorenzo De Sio, Mark N. Franklin & Luana Russo (eds.) *The European Parliament Elections of 2019*. LUISS University Press – Pola Srl. ISBN (print) 978-88-6105-411-0. ISBN (ebook) 978-88-6105-424-0.

Contributors

Jean Claude Cachia has been an academic with the Institute for European Studies since October 2015. He teaches modules in Small States, European Security, Research Methods and Political Parties. He is currently the MA Coordinator. Jean Claude obtained a BA (Hons) in International Relations from the University of Malta in 2008, and a Master of Arts in Diplomatic Studies in 2009 from the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies. In 2010, Jean Claude was awarded a Master of Arts in Research Methods in Politics and International Relations from the University of Sheffield. He was awarded a Ph.D. in Politics from the University of Lincoln in 2014, with a doctoral dissertation based on the Impact of Europeanization on Malta’s Political Parties and Party Systems.

Valentina Cassar is a Lecturer within the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Arts at the University of Malta. She completed a PhD in International Relations at the University of Aberdeen, where she conducted research on the post-Cold War Nuclear Strategic Cultures of the United States and Russia. Valentina is a graduate in International Relations from the University of Malta and a graduate in Strategic Studies from the University of Aberdeen. Before joining the Department of International Relations, she held posts within Malta’s Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs, the Ministry for Rural Affairs and the Environment, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Her research focuses on strategic studies and strategic cultures, nuclear politics, the foreign and security policies of the United States and Russia, and European Security and Defence.

Dimitris N. Chrysochoou is Professor of Theory and Institutions of European Integration in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; Honorary University Fellow in the College of Social Sciences and International Studies of the University of Exeter; Visiting Research Fellow at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä; and Visiting Researcher at the Centre for Political Research and Documentation, University of Crete. He has been Professor of Theory and Institutions of European Integration at Panteion University; Associate Professor of International Organization at the University of Crete; Reader in European

Integration at the University of Exeter; Visiting Professor at the Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Catania; Visiting Fellow at the Centre of International Studies and Associate Scholar at Pembroke College, University of Cambridge; Research Associate at the Centre for International Studies, University of Oxford; Visiting Fellow at the LSE European Institute; Visiting Scholar at the Institute on Western Europe, Columbia University; Visiting Researcher at the Global Studies Institute, University of Geneva; Visiting Research Fellow at the ARENA Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo; Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute for European Studies, University of Malta; Visiting Research Fellow at the Laboratory of Social and Political Institutions, University of the Aegean; Senior Research Fellow at the Hellenic Centre for European Studies; Visiting Researcher at the Centre for European Constitutional Law in Athens; Visiting Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute at Athens. He is the author of *Theorizing European Integration* (2nd ed., Routledge, 2009) and *Democracy in the European Union* (I. B. Tauris, 1998).

Sergio Fabbrini is Dean of the Political Science Department and Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the LUISS Guido Carli University in Rome, where he founded and directed the School of Government from 2010 to 2018. He is the Pierre Keller Visiting Professor at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government for the academic year 2019–10. He has published seventeen books, two co-authored books, and sixteen edited or co-edited books. His most recent publications in English include; *Europe's Future: Decoupling and Reforming* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019); *Which European Union: Europe After the Euro Crisis* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015), *Compound Democracies: Why the United States and Europe Are Becoming Similar*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010) and *America and Its Critics: Vices and Virtues of the Democratic Hyperpower* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2008). He writes political editorials for the Italian financial newspaper “*Il Sole 24 Ore*”, for which he was awarded the 2017 Spinelli Prize. He received other scientific prizes, and is one of the most respected European political scientists.

Agnes Kasper, BA MA PhD, is a Lecturer of Law and Technology at the Department of Law, Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech), Estonia. She has been teaching legal aspects of cybersecurity to law students, as well as to IT students at TalTech since 2012. Dr Kasper holds diplomas in international business, law and management. She has also received additional formal trainings on technical aspects of cybersecurity and digital evidence. Dr Kasper served at embassies and human rights organizations, and has led the legal department in an IT consultancy and development company. She has also acted in an advisory capacity in consultations with governments on issues relating to cybersecurity. Her research focuses on policy and regulatory aspects of cybersecurity; she is particularly interested in emerging technologies. She is a frequent speaker at events, seminars, conferences focusing on aspects of law, technology and security. In 2015, the Estonian Ministry

of Defence awarded Dr Kasper with the first prize for her doctoral thesis “Multi-Level Analytical Frameworks for Supporting Cyber Security Legal Decision Making”.

Bichara Khader is Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences of Louvain University, Belgium and Founder of the Centre d'études et de recherches sur le monde arabe contemporain – CERMAC. He has been a member of the Group of High Experts on the Common and Foreign Security Policy (European Commission) and a member of the Groupe des Sages for cultural Euro-Mediterranean dialogue (European presidency). Bichara Khader has written 30 books on the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Euro-Mediterranean and Euro-Arab relations.

Amelia Martha Matera is a caseworker at the Office of the Refugee Commission within the Maltese Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security. Asylum and refugee law is today her field of expertise. She gathered five years of professional experience in the field of asylum, migration and integration among the European Member States; such as Italy, Germany and Malta. She received a Bachelor's degree in Integrated European Studies from Bremen University, Germany; and a Master's degree in European Politics, Economics and Law from the University of Malta. She participated at several EASO and UNHCR trainings concerning asylum. She is interested in European migration policy, migration patterns, external dimension of the European migration policy, European External Action Service, Common European Asylum System, and asylum and refugee law.

Giles Merritt founded Friends of Europe in 1999, and its policy journal Europe's World in 2005. His career as a journalist spanned 15 years as a Financial Times foreign correspondent, the last five as Brussels Correspondent, and 25 years as a contributor of Op-Ed columns to the International Herald Tribune on European political and economic issues. In 2010 he was named by the Financial Times as one of 30 'Eurostars' who most influence thinking on Europe's future. His previous book is “Slippery Slope: Europe's Troubled Future” (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Nadia Petroni is a PhD student in International Relations at the University of Malta. She received a Master of Arts in Diplomatic Studies from the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) at the University of Malta (2007), and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business Studies from the University of Sunderland (2005). Her research interests focus on the diverse policy approaches within the EU to irregular migration, and the resulting impact on EU migration governance. She has recently published articles on the website of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and is currently in the final stages of her PhD thesis.

Richard Pomfret has been Professor of Economics at the University of Adelaide since 1992 and Jean Monnet Chair on the Economics of European Integration since 2017. Before moving to Adelaide, he was Professor of International Economics from 1979 to 1991 at the Johns Hopkins University in Washington, Bologna and Nanjing. He

has acted as adviser to the Australian government and consultant to international organizations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, the OECD and United Nations Development Programme. In 1993 he was seconded to the United Nations for a year, advising the Asian republics of the former Soviet Union on macroeconomic policy. His research interests centre on economic development and international economics. His recent books include *The Age of Equality: The twentieth century in economic perspective* (Harvard UP, 2011), *Regionalism in East Asia: Why has it flourished since 2000 and how far will it go?* (World Scientific, 2011), *Trade Facilitation: Defining, measuring, explaining and reducing the cost of international trade* (Edward Elgar, 2012 – co-authored with Patricia Sourdin) and *The Central Asian Economies in the Twenty-first Century: Paving a new silk road* (Princeton UP, 2019). He is currently working on *The Economics of European Integration* (to be published by Harvard UP in 2020).

Vlad Vernygora is a DSocSc candidate at the University of Lapland (Finland) and lecturer in International Relations at the Department of Law (School of Business and Governance), Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia. His broad research interests include contemporary political empires, strategic communication, Europe's interactions with the Asia-Pacific, the EU and its neighbourhood, and the Belt and Road Initiative. In the period from 2014 until 2017, Vlad was managing the operational side of the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme Project 'NATO Global Perceptions – Views from the Asia-Pacific Region'.

Foreword

European Integration's Extended Gestation: Forever half-pregnant

Giles Merritt

Does Europe have a collective future, or will the coming years be marked by increasingly incoherent developments within the heterogeneous EU? There is no denying that the second decade of this century has seen a strong mood shift away from the inter-dependence and concerted actions that guided Europe's national governments since the end of World War II, and then since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

What connections, if any, are there between the paroxysms of Brexit in the UK and the varying shades of populism in continental Europe? The common denominator may simply be the painful economic pressures resulting from waning global competitiveness.

It is clear that the high ideals of the European project no longer exert the same political pull. The EU's dreams of progressing almost seamlessly from a trading zone to a shared political economy are not being realised. Where are the convergence policies that would exert centripetal rather than centrifugal forces? Where is the appetite for reforms leading to political union, and whatever happened to the idea of Europeans speaking with one voice?

If the EU continues along its present path, the verdict of history may well be that it achieved little more than the welter of regulations needed to ensure trade flows. In geopolitical terms, Europe as a major player on the world stage may have been an illusion largely created by aggregating national statistics.

* * *

It is not inappropriate to start a disquisition on the problems clouding Europe's future by putting Malta under the microscope, even though it accounts for only 0.1 per cent of the European Union's population. The Maltese microcosm tells us at a glance much of what awaits the whole of Europe in the 21st century's increasingly difficult global environment.

We Europeans were some 15 per cent of the world's people forty years ago, and now only around seven per cent. We may speak dismissively of emerging economic giants like China, India and Brazil, suggesting they are copy-cats who use underhand

methods to invade our markets, but the reality is that as well as being younger they are more vibrant.

Alerting Europe's electorates to the consequences of demographic change has been frustratingly hard. Voters do not want to hear about it, least of all about the implications of ageing, so few politicians have had the courage to tell them.

Malta's demographic roller-coaster is a useful example of the way that ageing and a low birth rate can radically reshape a society over a comparatively short space of time. Its population profile looks like an alpine peak; having risen steeply, it will also fall precipitously.

In 1950 there were fewer than 320,000 Maltese, and since then the population has increased at about fifteen times the overall rate of the EU. But it is peaking, so by 2025 it is due to have shrunk from its present high point of 475,000 back down to 425,000. By the end of this century, Malta's population will – at 340,000 – be almost back to the level of 150 years before.

Naturally, demographers' projections do not always work out with total accuracy, but usually they beat those of economists into a cocked hat. So through the lens of tiny Malta we can discern the much larger picture of a radically changing European society and its workforce. Maltese may complain of being too crowded, yet mostly they accept the Government of Malta's pronouncement that to fuel economic growth they need more migrant workers.

This is the situation of the European Union in a nutshell. Observers of the EU scene may highlight the intricacies of its institutional developments, its successive enlargements and its regulatory outreach, but these are of far less consequence than the societal shifts within the member states. The focus of the EU – the 'Eurocrats' of the commission and the MEPs – is correctly on detail, but it is nevertheless time to readjust that focus and bring the big picture into sharper definition.

Europe is shrinking in absolute terms as well as proportionately in a world headed for 10 billion people by mid-century. A head count of all Europeans, not just the EU's citizens, reveals a total population of 740 million that is due to fall dramatically to 707 million by 2050.

More than half a century of plummeting birth rates has taken its toll, leading to downward spirals of manpower in most parts of Europe. The next 30 years will see the EU's working age population drop from the present 240 million to 207 million. That figure assumes that the current rate of economic migrants will be maintained; if not, the EU's workforce will number only 169 million by mid-century.

The average fertility rate in Europe is now 1.6 children per couple – slightly above Malta's 1.53 but far too low to reverse both the shrinkage and ageing trends now exerting an iron grip on the European political economy. The growth in the numbers of older people is not only a seemingly insoluble fiscal problem but also one that will challenge our basic concepts of democracy.

How EU governments will fund the steep increases in pensioners is an open question. In some countries, Italy for example, the proportion of retired over-65s to the total population will rise from 2.7 per cent today to 18.8 per cent in 2050. For Europe as a whole, the 'dependency ratio' of working age people to pensioners will, over the 40 years to mid-century, have halved from 4:1 to 2:1.

State-funded pension systems are already creaking, and it is hard to see how they can survive in their present form. The OECD foresees crippling burdens on national economies, reckoning that by 2060 the gap between pension costs and contributions will average some 10 per cent of an OECD member country's GDP.

That looks unsustainable, and yet it is only half of the equation. The other half is the political implications of the coming 'generations war'. How willing will today's 'millennials' be to pay for Europe's ageing when they are themselves under-privileged? And what will be the response of the under-50s to finding themselves electoral minorities in most EU countries?

The temptation is to use EU-wide statistics when discussing Europe's demographic difficulties, but these cloak a greater problem. The nations of Europe are being divided by population shifts, with the winners and losers from the free movement of people widening the wealth gaps the EU had set out to narrow.

Southern Europe's outlook is far from sunny. Portugal may, by 2060, see its population dwindle by 40 per cent, reducing from 10.5 million in 2010 to 6.3 million. Spain's present 47 million will by mid-century drop 11 per cent, or 5.3 million fewer people; while Italy's population of 62 million will decline to 55 million.

These future decreases are comparatively modest when set against the hemorrhaging of people from the EU's newcomer states. The eleven formerly communist countries have seen their combined populations drop to 103 million from 111 million, while the Baltic states have suffered an overall 25 per cent reduction. Romania's outlook is even worse: it faces a population cut of one third by 2060.

European public opinion has so far reacted to such projections with massive indifference, but that may be about to change. What will certainly stir protest and demands for new policies and more effective actions is the looming healthcare crisis threatening most parts of Europe. By the end of 2019, approaching a quarter of a million medical doctors will have stopped practising, reducing their numbers from 1.8 million to 1.57 million.

A combination of early retirements, inadequate medical training arrangements, and an increasingly ailing population of older people is creating a perfect storm. In Austria, 40 per cent of doctors will have taken retirement by 2025, and the pattern is similar across Europe. Ageing is hitting the healthcare sector too, with almost four doctors in ten now over 55 years old.

The writing has been on the wall for some time. The WHO's analysts rang their alarm bells almost 15 years ago, and the European Commission followed up with

a Green Paper and an 'Action Plan'. These were generally ignored, most probably because the health services of the richer western European countries were able to tap the new resource of healthcare workers from the new member states.

In its way, the coming healthcare crisis illustrates the impotence and even irrelevance of the EU and its institutions. Critics accuse Brussels of wanting to create a European super-state, but in truth its powers have been steadily sapped by its member governments. EU leaders meet more frequently than ever to confer as the European Council, but they do so because they have to wrestle with problems stemming from reduced rather than greater intra-EU cohesion.

What, then, does the future hold for the great political experiment of European integration? Is the basis of sixty years of peace and enlargement strong enough to relaunch the project? Will external pressures ranging from security dangers to failing technological supremacy awaken national politicians to the merits of EU cooperation?

The auguries are discouraging. Just as the Great War of 1914–18 is widely seen as the point at which the 20th century began, the worldwide financial crisis of 2008 seems to have characterised this century of rising Asia. Yet rather than respond to the new international conditions that redefine even the largest and most influential EU states as small countries, Europe's governments have reduced their collaboration, preferring to go their separate ways.

When Jean-Claude Juncker took over as President of the European Commission in autumn 2014, he labelled his five-year mandate a "last chance" for Europe, and promised bold new policies to stimulate investment and light red tape bonfires. The consensus amongst commentators, however, is that the EU has failed to kick-start investment and faster growth and has not delivered on goals that ranged from banking reforms to ambitious energy and digital market initiatives.

The EU's member states must bear much of the blame, with unforeseeable factors like the 2015–16 'migrant crisis' also playing a part. Now, the talk in national chancelleries is of a fresh start, with four areas to have top priority up to 2024.

The thinking is that Europe must, above all, recover its global leadership on environmental disciplines to combat climate change. On top of that it must tackle eurozone reform, the twin problems of ageing and migration and, not least, the many challenges of the Digital Age.

These are the preoccupations of policymakers and business leaders, but what of Europeans who increasingly are voting for populist and often anti-EU parties? What do citizens want, and how much support are they prepared to give to a mechanism many see as distant, unelected and unresponsive?

Complex cross-currents were revealed in a survey conducted for my own Brussels-based think-tank 'Friends of Europe'. When the pollsters questioned 11,000 people across all EU member states, they received some surprising answers. Four-fifths

oppose “less Europe” and moves to hand some of the EU’s powers back to national governments, while an overwhelming nine-tenths would not want to see any return to a mere trade zone.

At the same time, almost half questioned the EU’s relevance to their own lives, and two-thirds thought that they would not be much worse off if the EU were to somehow disappear overnight. Yet 40 per cent would like an internet-enabled vote on EU-level issues, 25 per cent would like to directly elect EU commission presidents, and 20 per cent would welcome a voice in how EU money is spent.

These are not ideas that get much play in the EU’s attempts to gauge public opinion, notably its Eurobarometer polling. But they reflect the way Europeans’ attitudes and expectations are becoming more complicated and fragmented.

A further complication, making discussion of Europe’s future akin to a game of three-dimensional chess, is the growing debate among member states over whether there should be a two-speed EU. Advocates of an inner core of ‘progressive’ countries and an outer ring of ‘conservative’ argue that it is the only realistic solution.

Set against concerns that a two-speed Europe entailing first-class and second-class citizens would spell the end of the EU, there is the reminder that this is already the case. Thirty years ago, the discussions leading up to the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 clearly set out the fact that creating the euro as a common currency would mean that countries with a derogation from eurozone membership would be in an outer ring.

It was also an integral element of the EU enlargement negotiations that the mostly ex-communist countries could not, or should not, adopt the euro. That is more or less where we still are, with roughly three-fifths of EU countries in the inner core of the eurozone. What was not understood at that time, though, was that the single currency would create economic divergences between countries rather than the convergence promised by its creators.

The upshot is that Europe is now riven by deep divisions, some of them inherent in the problems created by one-size-fits-all policies, others aggravated by the decade of austerity measures introduced in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

The north-south split between the ‘Club Med’ countries and the richer northern and Scandinavian countries has been further widened by the sharp differences that now exist between Paris and Berlin on reforming the eurozone. Germany, backed by the Netherlands, staunchly opposes new collective debt ideas. As the euro’s chief beneficiary, it may be signing its eventual death warrant.

There is also the east-west schism. The six founding member states together with those other richer countries that made up western Europe’s EU-15 treated the newcomers of the 2004 ‘Big Bang’ enlargement in a somewhat cavalier and condescending manner. They are now reaping the whirlwind of the seeds sown then, with the Visegrad states not alone in warning they will use the veto powers of membership to avoid the EU’s “interference” in matters they consider “sovereign”.

There seem two possible outcomes: either the EU's inertia and inability to grasp political nettles leads to an unsatisfactory business-as-usual approach, or there is disruptive reform. The former means the present frictions will persist and will probably be accentuated by widely projected stagnant economic growth.

The latter course of reform might lance many boils of discontent, but would open up bitter re-negotiations over what it means to be European. The outer ring of countries no longer to be bound by the most unyielding of EU disciplines would be relegated to a different legal framework and all that this implies.

These possibilities have not so far impinged greatly on public opinion. If and when they do so they will certainly stoke doubts over the value of the European 'project'. The background for many Europeans is security, and a sense that the EU is not delivering the stability and sense of foreign policy coherence they had been led to expect.

The migration issue has been throwing into stark relief the volatilities of the Middle East, the Gulf region and northern Africa. It has shown how far from reality are Europe's foreign affairs ambitions. The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, in spite of its creation of a 'foreign ministry' in the shape of its EEAS action service, clearly remains much more a trade and economic arm than a diplomatic one.

Successive opinion polls have shown that there is much support for a more muscular EU, with respondents apparently yearning for "a European army". As with so much of the Great Debate over Europe's future, such simple solutions would raise hugely complicated new questions over the political mechanisms that would be needed.

In other words, Europe remains in the place its policymakers have always feared and denied: it is half-pregnant.