

EUROPE IN CHANGES: THE OLD CONTINENT AT A NEW CROSSROADS

Katarina Zakić and Birgül Dimirtaş eds., *Europe in Changes: The Old Continent at a New Crossroads*, Institute of International Politics and Economics and Faculty of Security Studies at the University of Belgrade, 2021, pp. 482.

During its history, Europe has faced many crises and challenges that profoundly affected the future development of the continent. The most recent of these is the coronavirus pandemic, which spread at an unprecedented scale, profoundly altering the normal functioning at the global, regional, state and intrastate levels. However, Europe is not only confronted with this new threat but also with ones that existed long before the pandemic and have manifested in new and unexpected ways. This new crossroads for Europe is both a challenge to overcome the many difficulties it faces and an opportunity to redefine and transform itself for the new post-pandemic era. The collection of papers, *Europe in Changes: The Old Continent at a New Crossroads*, published by the Institute of International Politics and Economics and the Faculty of Security Studies, the University of Belgrade, makes a significant contribution to this subject by offering a thorough analysis of diverse factors which influence both Europe as a continent and the European Union (EU). The collection of papers is edited by Katarina Zakić and Birgül Dimirtaş, who carefully curated the 23 works the collection encompasses and divided them into four parts. Contributing authors include: Richard Sakwa, Miroslav Glišić, Branislav Đorđević, Dejan Stojković, Uroš Čemalović, Nevena Šekarić, Mihajlo Vučić, Elena Ponomareva, Dušan Proroković, Birgül Dimirtaş, Branko Krga, Duško Lopandić, Jelica Gordanić, Iulia Monica Oehler-Şincal, Ana Jović Lazić, Ivona Lađevac, Marek Hrubec, Miloš Petrović, Miro Haček, Vladimir Trapara, Andrey Fursov, Stephen Baskerville, Rastislav Kazansky, Anton Hrubon, Nataša Stanojević, Sanja Jelisavac Trošić, Katarina Zakić, Meixing Sun, and Ivan Dujčić.

The first part is titled *European Relations and European Security in the 21st Century: Trend and Transformation* and consists of eight papers that explore different evolving facets of European politics with a focus on security and its meaning in the 21st century. The authors zero in on the key elements that shape European security in different areas, ranging from the traditional sector of military security, through the energy security sector, the role of law and the influence of religion,

and finally to the cybersecurity sector that presents new security challenges for the globally interconnected world of today. One of the main aspects of the analysis is NATO's post-Cold war reinvention as a core of the New Atlanticism, a military hand of liberal hegemony which promotes regime change and humanitarian interventions, thus contributing to the constant decline in relations between the EU and Russia. This leads to another paper that explains the competition between NATO and Russia in the Balkans and the renewal of Moscow's influence in the region as a response to the increasingly aggressive NATO tactics. By comparing the role of EU institutions and that of the individual Member States in the defence domain, the authors conclude that the Member States, particularly France and Germany, have primacy (Glišić, Đorđević, and Stojković 2021, 57). However, in some areas, the EU is being rather proactive and tackling the rising challenges accordingly. This subject is explored in the paper on the EU's potential for further integration of the Member States through the idea of the Energy Union and the recent energy security dynamics on the continent. Another paper analyzes the European Union's pursuit of digital sovereignty through the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the two recent legislative proposals, the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA). On the other hand, yet another author argues for a greater balance between the concept of EU law supremacy and national legal systems through a more restrictive use of the concept of constitutional identity by national courts and better formulated EU law. Furthermore, the scope of this collection of papers goes beyond the EU, tackling the important security issue of global migration and the case of Turkey, which instrumentalizes the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the Diyanet, to support its migration policies. Zeroing in on Serbia, the first part concludes with a detailed comparison between the EU Global Strategy from 2016 and the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia.

The seven papers of the second part, titled *Global Europe: The Position of European Countries in World Politics*, shift the perspective to the diverse ways in which European countries face internal issues or act as global actors, whether through the EU or individually, with varying degrees of success. Firstly, it is given a comprehensive overview of the main regional challenges the EU faces and its potential and limitations as a global actor caused by its reliance on US military power. The EU's global aspirations lead to greater involvement in the Indo-Pacific region, but its role remains rather limited without a comprehensive grand strategy for the region. On the other hand, the Trump administration's actions contributed to the decoupling of the economic interdependence of China and the US, affecting the EU as well. Going to the state level, the relationship between the US and Germany, as one of the key European countries, was greatly affected during the Trump administration, caused by their

confronting understandings of multilateralism and the disagreements in bilateral relations due to issues such as the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline (Petrović 2021, 276). Another article discusses the internal implications of Slovenia's EU membership, as well as the country's decline in democracy and trust in the EU after its entry. Moving eastward and concentrating on the EU-Russia relationship, the authors offer a convincing argument on how their differences regarding NATO and Ukraine can be overcome in the future to cooperate on issues of common interest, such as climate change, terrorism, or the Iran Nuclear Deal. Finally, the Belarusian position between the EU and Russia is explored, with the author arguing that its unique development since independence is caused by "the mentality of the Belarusian people, who prefer political stability and personal safety and well-being to democracy and a stronger national identity" (Trapara, 2021, 320).

Numerous threats to the unity of the European Union, which affect solidarity between the Member States and the Union's ability to function as a single actor, are the subject of four articles in the third part, titled *Two Faces of Europe: Unity or Division*. Firstly, an interesting perspective on the geocultural aspect of European security is examined. The author examines how the concepts of multiculturalism, tolerance and political correctness influence the new state of affairs in Europe, using examples of France, Sweden, Germany and other countries. Another author zeroes in on Central and Eastern Europe and gives a unique take on the evolution of radical ideologies, especially religious ones, focusing on Islamism and New Puritanism. Taking the case study of Spain to analyze separatism as one of the key dividing factors in Europe, the next paper convincingly argues that Catalan separatism will have better prospects in the future than Basque separatism, concluding that the deepening of Catalan autonomy seems to be the most likely resolution of this issue (Kazansky 2021, 376). Finally, an insightful analysis of another important aspect, the use of fake news by neo-fascist organizations, is presented, using the case of Slovakia, with the author pointing out the alarming rise of this kind of rhetoric in Slovakian mainstream politics.

The fourth and last part of the collection of papers, titled *New Trends on the Economic Horizon in Europe*, is focusing on the economy and developing tendencies regarding trade, foreign investment and economic cooperation. The first paper explores the growing number of EU trade restrictions, highlighting the screening process of potential foreign investments and the general shortening of European value chains. This also affects the EU-China economic relations, whose development during the COVID-19 pandemic is the topic of the next article. The authors explain how the trade relations suffered expectedly during the first half of 2020 but point out that "in the first ten months of 2020, China was the EU's main trade partner" due to the subsequent recovery (Zakić

and Sun 2021, 452). On the other hand, as a key international economic actor, the EU is one of the most important drives for the reform of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Another author gives an overview of EU proposals in this regard and contrasts them with those of the US, China, Japan and Canada, concluding that although the reform is needed, the suggested ideas are very different. The final paper in this collection analyzes the EU economic relations with Latin American countries. The author explains the rise and fall of the EU's investment in this region and focuses on the effects and opportunities created by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Finally, with a diverse set of issues and subjects covered and a clear and logical structure, *Europe in Changes: The Old Continent at a New Crossroads* is an insightful collection of papers that offers new perspectives and in-depth analysis of important security, political, and economic aspects that influence and will continue to influence the Old Continent's future.

Pavle NEDIĆ

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