

A Closer Look to the ‘Ever Ending’ Democratic Deficit Discussions in the European Union*

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Abstract

Discussions on the authority and responsibility of the European Union (EU) institutions are more than as it seems. As a supranational organization, democratization of the EU has long been discussed. Some researchers have argued that the EU's democracy deficit stems from its structural state. Opposing ideas claim that the EU is democratic enough. In this sense, both the inequality between the institutions and the difference between the structures of the institutions are the subject matter of the discussion. Decision making process is made through European Parliament (EP) in which the members are chosen by the EU states' public. Despite the limited authorization of EP, this parliament is expected to be the voice of public. Recent Eurozone crisis and the results of the 2019 EP elections flared up the debate. This paper argues that there cannot be direct democracy in the union i.e. citizens cannot participate directly in the Community-decision making process and this does not cause a democratic deficit. The EU is not and cannot be- by nature- a state, therefore its democratization is unquestionable.

Keywords: European Union, Democracy, Democratic Legitimacy, Democratic Deficit

Avrupa Birliđi'nde ‘Bitmeyen’ Demokrasi Açıđı Tartışmalarına Yakından Bakış

Özet

Avrupa Birliđi (AB) kurumları arasındaki yetki ve sorumluluk hakkındaki tartışma görüldüđünden çok daha geniřtir. Uluslarüstü bir organizasyon olarak AB'nin demokratikliđi uzun yıllardır tartışılmaktadır. Konu ile ilgili bazı arařtırmacılar AB'nin demokrasi açıđının örgütün yapısal durumundan kaynaklandığını ve dođal olduđunu savunmuşlardır. Karşıt tezler ise AB'nin zaten yeterince demokratik olduđu şeklindedir. Bu anlamda hem kurumlar arasındaki eřitsizlik hem de kurumlar arasındaki yapısal farklılıklar tartışmanın ana konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Karar alma süreci AB üyelerinin kamuoyları tarafından seçilen Avrupa Parlamentosu (AP) aracılıđıyla yapılmaktadır. Ancak sınırlı yetkisi ile AP, halkın sesi olmaktan uzaktır. Son avro krizi ve 2019 AP seçimlerinin sonuçları demokrasi açıđı tartışmalarını daha da alevlendirmiştir. Bu makale, bir yandan AB'de demokrasi açıđı olup olmadığını incelerken diđer yandan vatandaşlarının karar alma sürecine doğrudan katılacağı bir demokrasi olamayacağını ileri sürmektedir. AB; bir devlet yapısında olmadığı -ve doğası geređi olamayacağı için- demokrasi açıđı olup olmadığı sorgulamaya açık değildir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa Birliđi, Demokrasi, Demokratik Meşruiyet, Demokrasi Açıđı

Introduction

The EU is continuing to expand with almost 500-million-citizens living inside its borders stands being unique among other political formations. Not surprisingly, this kind of a political formation seems far away from being ‘democratic’ considering the general meaning of democracy.¹ It has been very often argued that the EU has a democratic deficit

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¹ A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy> (10.09.2020).

but it has been discussed to a lesser extent whether it really needs to be democratic. If only the EU was a single state with its own citizens, own army and had one constitution, one single citizenship would have the chance of direct control over the decision making mechanism. However, in an enlarging EU decision making process, made through EP in which the members are chosen by the EU states' public. Despite the limited authorization of EP, it is expected to be the voice of public.

The democratic deficit in the EU has been studied by various scholars like Majone (1998), Eriksen and Fossum (2002), Zweifel (2002), Moravcsik (2003, 2004), Follesdal and Hix (2006), Nicolaïdis (2003, 2013) and Schmidt (2003, 2013). Each of these scholars brought valuable contributions to the question of whether the EU has a democratic deficit or not; although it is impossible for the scholars to unite under a common idea at the end of the discussions. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the EU's democratic deficit problem is ever ending; seems like it will be long discussed. This article aims to contribute to the debate by evaluating the existing studies about the subject and end up with agreeing one of these ideas. Meanwhile, the article will handle the recent political situations in the EU like Eurozone crises, 2019 EP elections and rise of the Euroskeptic parties in the EP.

This article has a twofold argument. First, it defends that the EU is as democratic as it could be regarding its supranational structure. Secondly, democracy and democratic principles have either never served as the main principles of the EU expected to affect the organization or functioning of the EU in a large extent. This article begins with general comments on democratic deficit in the EU. In the second section, the so-called *superstate* structure of the EU is evaluated. Following section includes the evaluation of the structure of the EU including its institutions. Considering that the EU cannot be treated by its democratic legitimacy, an alternative EU style-democracy is discussed in the subsequent sections. The effects of the Eurozone crisis- economic and political crisis of the EU- and the estimations about the future of the EU's democratic legitimacy are considered in the last section of the article. This article contributes to the debate by evaluating the last EP elections on May 2019 and further discussions on the EU's on-going financial and political crisis.

General Comments on 'Democratic Deficit' in the EU

The EU has changed both its structure and the name in 1993 with Maastricht Treaty and became an economic and political union, a *sui generis* model, an unidentified political object² lesser than a federation more than a regime.³ Moreover it became a union that promise its citizens peace, stability and prosperity and high living standards within its borders. Enlarging itself over the years, the EU has been accused of lacking one of its founding values of democracy. Some scholars defending that the EU does not need democracy -like Andrew Moravcsik and Giandomenico Majone- some others still think that there is a democratic deficit in the Union like Andreas Føllesdal and Simon Hix. The Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe Commonly opens by a quotation by Thucydides: "Our Constitution is called a democracy because power is not in the hands of a minority but of the greatest number."⁴ The ideal features of democracy have never played the desired role in the functioning of the EU.

²Speech by Jacques Delors (Luxemburg, 9 September 1985), Retrieved from https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2001/10/19/423d6913-b4e2-4395-9157-fe70b3ca8521/publishable_en.pdf.

³Wallace, W, Less than a Federation, More than a Regime: The Community as a Political System. In Wallace, H. (Ed.) Policy-Making in the European Community, Chichester: John Wiley 1983, pp. 403-36.

⁴Hansen, M.H., Thucydides' Description of Democracy (2.37.1) and the EU Convention of 2003", Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies 48, 2008, pp. 15-26. Retrieved from <https://grbs.library.duke.edu>.

Chryssochoou⁵ defines democracy as “A method of organizing public life that allows the concerns and interests of citizens to be articulated within the government. Democracy’s defining properties are its institutional controls, the peaceful resolution of conflicts in society, meaningful legislative representation, as well as civic inclusion, a political participation.”

EUR-lex glossary defines democratic deficit as

“Democratic deficit is a term used by people who argue that the EU institutions and their decision-making procedures suffer from a lack of democracy and seem inaccessible to the ordinary citizen due to their complexity. The real EU democratic deficit seems to be the absence of European politics. EU voters do not feel that they have an effective way to reject a ‘government’, they do not like, and to change, in some ways, the course of politics and policy” (www.eurolex.europa).

Scicluna argues that the democratic deficit of the EU is a result of the unrepresentative nature of the EU’s governing institutions and the lack of popular contestation over policies and political leadership.⁶ All the scholars agree that the problem is related to the lack of involvement of the people in the European-level government. Since in classical political theory there is no authorization to use power intrinsic to nation state and because of limited budget authority; the EU cannot be qualified as a nation state⁷. Some scholars define the EU not a *superstate* rather than a political system based on several reasons: the EU lacks having a clear distinction between the ‘competencies and powers’ and the member states.⁸ The EU is an evolving process which is subject to change. Institutional power and authority in the EU are split between the different actors- rather than the so-called *EU citizens*. This brings a natural result of the complexity of the functioning of the EU. Since there are different policy areas; there exist also different actors that govern processes.

According to Dahl “even if nominally democratic political institutions as in the EU, are likely to violate the democratic principle even more extensively than decision making at the national level in democratic countries. Federal systems typically, perhaps invariably, violate the criterion of voting equality, because representation in parliament is not proportional to population or citizens but on the contrary gives disproportionate weight to states, provinces, or regions with smaller populations”.⁹

The Structure of the EU

One single state has some features. A population living residing in a specific area is a must for being a state. The EU has approximately 513 million population¹⁰. If the EU

⁵ Chryssochoou, Dimitris N., “EU Democracy and the Democratic Deficit”, In Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borragán (Ed), European Union Politics Oxford University Press: Oxford 2003, pp. 377-89., p. 377.

⁶ Scicluna, N., Politicization Without Democratization: How the Eurozone crisis is Transforming, I-CON 12 (3), 2014, pp. 545-71, p. 253.

⁷ Zweifel, T. D., Who is Without sin cast the first stone: The EU’s Democratic Deficit in Comparison, Journal of European Public Policy, Vol. 9, No. 5, 2002, pp. 812-40, p. 814.

⁸ Kassim, H. “The European Administration: Between Europeanization and Domestication”. In Governing Europe Ed. Hayward, J. And Menon, A., Oxford University Press: Oxford 2003, pp. 139-161.

⁹ Dahl, Robert A., A Democratic Dilemma: System Effectiveness Versus Citizen Participation, Political Science Quarterly Vol 109, No 1, 1994, pp. 23-34, p.30.

¹⁰ Eurostat News release <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/9967985/3-10072019-BP-EN.pdf/e152399b-cb9e-4a42-a155-c5de6dfe25d1> (25 August 2019).

were a state, it would be the third most crowded one in the world. An independent state can be established within the territory of a sovereign country. For example, all of the independent countries in the EU are inside the territory of EU since they form the territory of the EU. Although the EU seems like fulfilling the requirements of being a state for some reasons it is different from the ordinary states. Decision making mechanism resides in three institutions: the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The Council of the EU consists of heads of state / government of each EU member state (such as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the President of France, and the Chancellor of Germany). These people, or at least the political parties to which they are responsible, are chosen by the citizens of each country, which makes the EU democratic. There is also a Council President attending meetings. The President of the Council is elected by the members of the Council and replaced every two and a half years. The EU Council meets twice in every six months and provides insight into how the EU should be governed and what its priorities should be. But he has no power to implement these ideas. The EC consists of a representative of each EU country and a Commission President¹¹. Each EU member government submits its own candidates to become representatives in the EC, but the President decides which one to accept. So far this kind of governance seems not to be fully democratic.

The task of the EC is to produce ideas for the new laws and policies of the EU; but it cannot officially enact them since this is the competence of the EP. The EP at times should co-legislate policies particularly on high politics areas such as security and defense. The Commission is also required to ensure that the EU countries follow the existing laws. There are 751 members of the EP (MEPs). Each EU country has several MEPs in proportion to its population. MEPs are elected by citizens of the EU countries, such as British MPs, every five years. They vote for the laws proposed by the EC: the majority wins. The EU countries may therefore have to adopt laws that they do not vote for. The degree of democracy within such a government can be questionable.

Citizens of the member states should accept and adopt the idea that the EU is not only economic rather than a political integration that put all the citizens in the middle. According to Majone¹², as long as the majority of the citizens of the Member States oppose to the idea of a European super-state, while supporting far reaching economic integration, democratic politics cannot be expected to flourish at the European level. Therefore, it can be concluded that the EU's democratic deficit is justified. It was once assumed that the EU was a nation state with its own boundaries and having its own army and constitution rather than the states' having their own, then democratic deficit would be a subject to the debate. The EU has complicated the processes based on the history of the regional states, where sovereignty is shared with the constituent member states and depending on the conditions of internal acceptance and external recognition; boundaries vary according to geography; identity is the international compound of being at the EU, national and sub-national levels; multi-level, multi-center and multi-form institutions¹³. Therefore, it is tough for the EU to form a truly national 'European' identity. It can be only accepted as a compound of national identities under specific EU constructions. Because of the above arguments, it is possible to

¹¹ "European Commission" Retrieved from https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en (24 August 2020).

¹² Majone, G., Europe's 'Democratic Deficit': The Question of Standards, *European Law Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1998, pp. 5-28.

¹³ Schmidt, V. A. "The European Union: Democratic Legitimacy in a Regional State?", Center for European Studies Working Paper No.112, 2003, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9886.2004.00537.x>.

say that the EU is having an indirect democracy through national parliaments. Decreasing the role of national parliaments will not be a solution for the so called democracy problem in the union due to the *sui generis*¹⁴ structure of the union.

The Role of the EP and the Rise of the Euroskeptical Parties

Parliaments are decision making bodies. Since the EU cannot be called as a state; EP does not function like states' parliaments. First EP elections took place on 7 and 10 June 1979, after the Act on European elections entered into force¹⁵. Even after first direct elections, decision making role of EP was still weak. The EU is not based on party democracy, and there is more scope for open deliberation in the EP than in a fully-fledged party-based system. EP has formulated several draft constitutions like it is expected from. The EP has also argued that the democratic deficit of the EU is actually a parliamentary deficit. Since the entity with the greatest potential to become the foremost embodiment of the peoples of Europe, the EP has been a core actor in the promotion of democratic legitimacy within the EU particularly since the 1980s¹⁶.

Democratic deficit can be attributed to the current electoral and party system forming the institutional deficiencies as well as not having a single European people. Since all the authority and responsibility belongs to European institutions, supranational identity does not have a chance to take the nationalist votes. According to Decker¹⁷ the direct election of the Commission president and the transfer of core national competences (such as foreign and security policy) to the EU. This approach is complemented by Hix and Føllesdal, who see the lack of a European-wide party system and the absence of a clearly recognizable parliamentary opposition at EU level as the greatest hindrances to the development of democracy at that level¹⁸.

The working logic of the EU stands on a critical point: The governing system of the EU gives most of the autonomy to the EU officials in the following areas: central banking, constitutional decision, criminal and civil persecution, technical administration and probably the most important, economic diplomacy. This government system is by nature 'undemocratic' considering the other factors¹⁹. The debate on the distribution of power over the EC over the next five years has been fueled by the finalization of the number of parties' representatives in the EU's 751-seat parliament. Although it is difficult to make a final judgement, the EPP, S&D, ALDE and G / EFA groups, which have traditionally been clustered as pro-EU, will represent approximately 70% of the parliament, but the total number of left and right populist parties identified as European skeptics (Euroskeptics) the number of seats remaining at 250 may be an important indicator for EU institutions that are expected to take shape in the near future. However, it is difficult to interpret the increase in

¹⁴ Unique, peculiar. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sui%20generis> (10.09.2020).

¹⁵ "The European Parliament Historical Background", 2020, Retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.3.1.pdf.

¹⁶ Neunreither, K., The Democratic Deficit of the European Union: Towards Closer Cooperation between the European Parliament and the National Parliaments, Government and Opposition Vol. 29, No. 3, 1994, p. 310.

¹⁷ Decker, F., Governance Beyond the Nation-state. Reflections on the Democratic Deficit of the European Union, Journal of European Public Policy Vol. 9, No. 2, 2002, pp. 256-72.

¹⁸ Føllesdal Andreas and Hix Simon, Why There is A Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik, Journal of Common Market Studies Vol 44, No 3, 2006, p.552,

¹⁹ Moravcsik A., Is there a Democratic Deficit in World Politics? A Framework for Analysis, Government and Opposition Vol. 9, No. 2, 2004, p. 362.

voter turnout and the low success of the right populist parties in the EP as a triumph of EU integration policies and democracy.²⁰

Considering legislative procedures; in the three pillars of the EU, that they had their own regulation and decision making initiative. There is an invisible separation of powers between the institutions of the EU. Besides, the differentiated methods in the decision making process and informal consultations make predictions regarding such kind of regulation that should be implemented. Different opinions were presented about how to make these institutions democratic. EP is at the center of these discussions. EP aims to fulfill the democracy need of its citizens. Main task that is attributed to EP is to control national governments although it was jammed between three main institutions of the union: the Council, the Commission, and the Parliament.

The EP has limited powers to influence the decisions and functioning of the EU institutions: the EP cannot collect taxes, enact new laws, and has no broad authority to hold the EC accountable for its decisions. For the EP, the democratic deficit undermines the link between leaders and citizens, which is necessary for the governance. The 2019 elections have been an exception for the last 20 years and it has been observed that the European public have an increased attention towards the elections. The crack in the Union created by the deficit of democracy in the EP brings up the arguments regarding the legitimacy of the Union, which in turn leads to a continuous expression of the effective EP by the anti-EU media.

European Style Democracy

Scholars agree on the idea that although there may not be a single citizen in the EU, there would still be some people who are in favor of democracies and would rather together form the EU "demoicracy".²¹ Besides, the national executives in the Council of Ministers express their wishes -still indirectly- plus the voices of the elected national members of the EP can express their wishes- directly and faintly.²² Assuming that the legitimacy means defending minority rights as well as that of the majority, the EU can be said to be legitimate. National executives have right to turn back any rule that is subject to consensus. Also, the consensus rule with high political saliency is not a must for the member state. The deepest impact on European Citizens' is probably the supranational rights of the citizens. Not only Maastricht (1992) and Lisbon Treaties (2007), but also the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights of 2009 assimilated European Citizenship. This citizenship includes the fundamental rights of the national citizenship plus the ones that is required to be a so-called *EU citizen* like the right to vote, the promise of regular elections, the right to stand in these elections regardless of residence in the EU, and the freedom of movement within the EU (Articles 10, 11, 21 and 45 TEU and EU Charter 2009).²³

There have been some attempts to form common European values like living in a single state rather than in a supranational state; which persistently increases the power of nation state. Considering the fact that to impose a new treaty to all member states will be

²⁰ "EP Election Results", (02 July 2019), Retrieved from <https://europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en> (20 August 2020).

²¹ Nicolaïdis, K., "Our European Demoicracy: Is this Constitution a Third Way for Europe?", In, (Nicolaïdis, K, and Weatherill, S. (Ed.) *Whose Europe? National Models and the Constitution of the European Union*, 2003, pp. 137-152, Oxford University Print.

²² Scharpf, F., *Democracy large and small: Reforming the EU to sustain democratic legitimacy on all levels*, Juncture 21, 2015, p. 271.

²³ Lee, D., *The European Union's Democratic Deficit and Options for EU Democracy in the 21st Century*, EUC Working Paper No. 22, 2014, Retrieved from <http://aei.pitt.edu/>.

implausible, one possible suggestion for the solution of democratic deficit problem could be about the EU commissioners. In order to make the citizens feel like they involve in the decision process will be to let them choose EU commissioners with the direct election by the national citizens.²⁴ Carroll argues that “the European democracy and civil liberty are powerful forces for change. And now the remote EU is at much greater risk from external threats should it fail to engage citizens in a public debate about the true value of its existence – as the post-war ‘permissive consensus’ ends.”²⁵ Dimitris Chrysochoou claims: “The starting point is that without a European demos there can be no European democracy and at the heart of the EU’s democratic deficit lies the absence of a civic we-ness – that is, a sense of common identity among Europeans”.²⁶

Accustomed to the characteristic of the national-level democracies, European style democracy is unique and differentiates itself from other supranational organizations. It is not reasonable to expect the EP to be a representative of union citizens considering the fact that the EU’s citizen body is massively larger than that of the USA’s. There are more democratic ideas and a heterogenous structure of governance than it seems. Without giving the citizens the value of being an ‘individual’ and a part of the Union- besides being a citizen of a Union state, it should be ineptness to expect EU citizens to care about the EU politics. The absence of a ‘European’ element in national and European elections means that EU citizens’ preferences for issues on the EU policy agenda have only a indirect influence on EU policy outcomes²⁷. European style democracy requires the assumption that there is nothing to legitimate about it. The structure of the Union governance tend to produce negative integration and its institutions are criticized for producing negative integration.

If it is necessary to redefine the democratic deficiency of the EU, it would be wise to bear in mind that the Union desires to keep the authority mostly in its hands whilst disregarding the national democracies that are not ready to share their authority. This is a two sided relationship in which no side becomes totally interdependent.²⁸ A democratic EU would not really be more democratic regarding its very diverse structure consisting of several national policies. What specific features one single state could have is much more complicated in a *superstate* because of its diversity. Schmidt clarifies the distinction between national style democracy and European style democracy as follows: “Nation state style democracy explicable as “government *by* the people” through political participation, “government *of* the people” through citizen representation, “government *for* the people” through effective government does not fit to the European style democracy as government “*for* the people and *with* the people.”²⁹

The EU does not actually have the problem of democratic deficit, it has the problem of delegation of power from its governing bodies to the member states. Probably it is the view of democracy that directs the studies to come up with a conclusion to a democratic deficit in the EU. Whereas the strong role of national governments and its limited mandate

²⁴ Bonde, Jans-Peter, The European Union’s Democratic Deficit How to Fix it, Brown Journal of World Affairs , Vol 7, No 2, 2011, pp. 147-62, p.160, Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org>.

²⁵ Carroll, Dean, Failure to address EU ‘democratic deficit’ could bring about the collapse of the European project, 22 August 2014, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140822120321-89750067-failure-to-address-the-eu-s-democratic-deficit-could-bring-about-the-collapse-of-the-european-project> (20 August 2019).

²⁶ Chrysochoou, Dimitris N., Theorizing European Integration, Routledge: New York, 2008, p.149.

²⁷ Follesdal A, Hix S., Why There is A Democratic Deficit..., 2006, p.552.

²⁸ Nicolaidis, K., European democracy and its crisis, Journal of Common Market Studies Vol. 5, No. 2, 2013, p. 352.

²⁹ Schmidt, V. A., The European Union: Democratic Legitimacy in a Regional State?, Center for European Studies Working Paper No. 112., 2003, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0021-9886.2004.00537.x>.

over the citizens results with direct political participation.³⁰ According to this point of view, the EU does not deserve to be critiqued in this context where there is not a truly European demos. Beside, in EU there is no demand or supply of a European super-demos or a European super democracy.³¹ Scharpf argues about the no-demos problem by adding that "EU's internal divisions far exceed the ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural heterogeneity of any national consensus democracy and its member states are much more diverse in size, wealth, social institutions, policy legacies, historical memories and political aspirations than is true of the component polities of democratic federal states".³²

Democracy and the Eurozone Crisis

Eurozone crisis, which has started in 2008, cannot be held responsible for increasing the so-called democratic deficit problem of the EU. The debates on the EU politics that have emerged through the Euro crisis have not helped the democratic legitimacy of the EU rather than widening the gap between the supporters of European integration and Euroskeptics.³³ Almost 12 years after the Eurozone crisis, the authoritarian implementation of an austerity program known to be inoperative and the completely closed structure of the system inevitably created an idea among the voters. Against the market-right center (and neoliberalism-social democrats) extreme right-wing options are settling. In this context, unless the neoliberal structure of the EU has changed, it can be foreseen that political turmoil will continue to increase.

Considering the causes of the economic crisis and the obstacles to the solution process, it can be argued that economic integration is tried to be realized in a politically fragmented structure together. The EU leaders may agree on several decisions, but some non-binding regulations that cannot be enforced or requires public support lacks the legitimacy. The current crisis seems like an exam for the EU and its Single Market for 500 million consumers. Illegible dynamos such as Germany and the UK are the places that have potential for growth. The crisis is not limited to the economic level and naturally its effects have also an influence upon the domestic politics of the countries. Citizens of the member countries, especially those affected by the crisis sanctions, measures packages that upset the customary social welfare direct intervention in decision-making processes as an attack on independence.

Due to the failure of politicians to manage the spreading and deepening of the crisis, some members' technocrats have been appointed as presidents of countries. All these developments are already associated to the problem of "democracy deficit" and make the EU's future questionable. On the other hand, it is possible to say that both nationalism and EU-skepticism increases. Considering the fact that EU-skepticism and EU's democratic legitimacy is directly proportional; democratic deficit also tends to rise. As the economic crisis persists; this would indeed let questioning of the political union. Further, it may become inevitable to completely lose its vision of expansion. In this pessimistic scenario that is unwelcomed, an enlargement perspective loses its clarity.

The crisis has actually created a great opportunity for reform in Europe. For years, the Union has entered the process of reviewing its political and institutional architecture behind the accumulated imbalances. The fragmented structure that has been active in

³⁰ Moravcsik A., *Is there a Democratic Deficit in World Politics*, 2004, p. 361.

³¹ Neyer, J., *Justice, not democracy: Legitimacy in the European Union*, *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol. 48, No. 4, 2010, p.906.

³² Scharpf, F., *Democracy large and small*, 2015, p. 271.

³³ Galpin Charlotte, *The Euro Crisis and European Identities*, Palgrave Macmillan: Cham., 2017., p.211.

European politics to this day delayed the necessary reforms. The leaders in Europe seek solutions to the crisis and to the tension created by the differences. However, a long time and an effort are needed to meet in a common point and some difficulties would be experienced meanwhile. Once again, the EU has seen that the road to a real economic and political unity is a complicated process with some problems to be faced along this path. Re-determination of cooperation areas of member states need to compromise across a wide range of policies until successful management is achieved. This is similar to the driving process of the policy coordination cycle towards the compromise plane, it is a journey to lose in terms of European countries. There are different views on how to overcome the neoliberal EU crisis. An idea that is forwarded by Nuhanović and Pašić³⁴ is that the current crisis can be overcome by further integration. In other words, the problem can be solved only if the fiscal union follows the monetary union, that is to say the establishment of the *United States of Europe*, since transfers from the current surplus countries to the current deficit will be possible. However, this option is difficult to implement and full integration requires the complete ineffectiveness of the member states whose action is already restricted.

The debt crisis in the Euro area has had not only economic but also political and social implications. Under the influence of the debt crisis, the establishment of technocratic governments under the presidency of Lucas Papademos in Greece and Mario Monti in Italy has brought questions of institutional deficit, the question of institutional legitimacy and the EU project, which already exist in the European public opinion. The democracy is discussed in terms of democracy standards that the technocratic governments in Italy and Greece are in charge, and that the appointees, rather than the elected, start governing the countries.³⁵ In the developments in Hungary, unity is questioning itself about democracy.

The measures taken on economic grounds intensify the concerns already existing on the democratic nature of the union, which the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty cannot resolve. Although the executive body of the EU, which is ruled by the Lisbon Treaty as a basis for representative democracy, is not present in the Commission's presidential system or in the parliamentary system.³⁶ The strengthening of the supervisory power of the member states on economic and fiscal policies and the ability to impose sanctions on member states that do not comply with the relevant rules under the name of the vote makes the regulations made for economic reasons questionable from the perspective of democracy. There have been many changes in governance in the EU against the public debt crisis. Legislation such as the six-pack of laws that tighten the rules of the stability and growth pact, new agreements such as coordination and governance agreements that limit the costs of the member states, or intergovernmental agreements, such as the European Semester Commission and the Council's member countries' macroeconomic policies.

Conclusion

The definition of democracy is not yet agreed upon. The problem of the EU's democratic deficit is by nature always open to debate. Some scholars defend that the EU has democratic deficit since it is not a single state and with no EU citizen, rather has national

³⁴ Nuhanović, A. Pašić J., "Crisis (of Idea) of European Union: Conditions and Possibilities to Overcome" *International Business Research* Vol. 12, No. 8, 2019, pp. 53-60. doi:10.5539/ibr.v12n8p53.

³⁵ Finbow, Robert, "The Eurozone Crisis and the Fiscal Treaty: Implications for the Social Dimension and Democracy" In Finn Laursen (Ed.) *The EU and the Eurozone Crisis*, Routledge: New York, 2016., p.45-48.

³⁶ Shackleton, M., Transforming representative democracy in the EU? The role of the European Parliament, *Journal of European Integration* Vol. 39, No. 2, 2017, pp. 191-205. doi:10.1080/07036337.2016.1277713, p.192.

citizens who cannot vote directly over the Unions' decisions. Other scholars however agree that the EU has no democratic deficit, rather has structural deficit. This study agrees to the scholars that line up with the EU has structural deficit rather than democratic deficit. The Commission and the Council should have more responsibility towards the EP, as in the case of parliamentary systems. For a democratic EU, first of all, social legitimacy will have to be achieved. The need to be closer to the public should not be forgotten. For this purpose, as an innovation introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, meticulous attention should be paid to making the legislative meetings open to the public. Although the Lisbon Treaty is promising, it is clear that the rapprochement with the people part of the democracy deficit will continue to be studied after the treaty. As a result, it is clear that some more time is needed to see the post-Lisbon evolution of the democratic development of the EU. European Citizens initiative did not let the system change for the benefit of the citizens since the structure does not let.

The EU has faced the greatest crisis of democracy in its half-century existence. At one point, there are social and political consequences of the economic crisis in the Eurozone in southern countries. In countries like Spain where almost one in two young people is unemployed³⁷, people question the democratic legitimacy of the saving policies that the EU imposes on elected representatives of their countries. While this may be the ineffectiveness of the democratic governance, it is an objection familiar with the EU, which bases its origin on the principle of representative democracy. Several assumptions and arguments in this article may not be universally true and accepted. Because, democratic legitimacy of the EU depends on variable factors like how democratic the nation states are and their competency as well. In the developing world, it is neither very reasonable nor feasible to come up with exact, optimistic and generalized results. Rather than finding one single solution, it is crucial to accept that the democratic character of the EU depends mostly on its capacity to make European people happy and accomplish their goals.

³⁷Spain Youth Unemployment Rate, <https://tradingeconomics.com/spain/youth-unemployment-rate>, (10 September 2020).

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