**IN WHAT TERMS IS, OR ISN'T, EUROPEAN INTEGRATION A SUCCESS?**

**¿EN QUE TÉRMINOS ES UN ÉXITO, O NO, LA INTEGRACIÓN EUROPEA?**

**EM QUE TERMOS É UM SUCESSO, OU NÃO, A INTEGRAÇÃO EUROPEIA?**



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**SUMARIO:** 1. Introduction. 2. The Initial Design of European Integration: "Negative Integration". 3. Vectors Opposing to the Deepening of European Integration. 4. Vectors Favoring European Integration. 5. New Coordinates. 6. Conclusions. Fecha de recepción 05/12/2013 fecha de aceptación 07/02/2014.

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**Resumen**: Se han señalado, en teoría general, factores que alientan y factores desalentadores de la integración internacional. El éxito o el fracaso de un proceso de esta naturaleza, su nivel de calidad o profundidad, dependen en última instancia del equilibrio entre esas especies de factores. Europa, como pionera de este nuevo tipo de relaciones internacionales, ha servido como referencia para los experimentos de integración entretanto creados un poco por todo el mundo. Y, sin embargo, Europa constituye un ejemplo de dificultad de resolución del equilibrio entre los señalados factores. De hecho, la integración europea ha seguido un camino no lineal, con oscilaciones entre avances y retrocesos, ligados a la intensidad y especificidad de las características de tales factores, con respecto a Europa y a los europeos. Dejamos aquí algunas contribuciones relativas al análisis y a la proyección de los factores que condicionan el proceso de integración europea.

**Resumo.** Têm sido apontados, em teoria geral, factores incentivadores e factores desincentivadores da integração internacional. O êxito ou fracasso dum processo desta natureza, o seu nível de qualidade ou de profundidade, dependem afinal do balanço entre ambas as espécies de factores. A Europa, como pioneira deste novo tipo de relações internacionais, tem servido de referência para os modelos de integração entretanto concretizados um pouco por todo o Mundo, sem embargo de constituir um exemplo acabado de dificuldade de equacionamento do balanço entre os apontados factores. Na verdade, a integração europeia tem seguido um percurso pouco linear, com oscilações entre avanços e recuos, aliás ligados à intensidade e especificidade das características de que tais factores se revestem, no concernente à Europa e aos Europeus. Deixamos aqui alguns contributos relativos à análise e à projecção dos factores condicionantes do processo de integração europeia.

**Palabras Claves:** Integración internacional; Integración europea; Unión Europea.

**Palavras-chave:** Integração internacional; Integração europeia; União Europeia.

## 1   Introduction

Much has been written about European integration and it would be unnecessary to insist on the reasons why. In fact, Europe has been the pioneer of a new form of international arrangement among States and holds a leading position in what refers to that new experience.

The events which shook the European Continent in the middle of last century, mainly the Second World War (after all, an European war that escalated up to the world level), have represented a strong incentive for another kind of relationship among Europeans (even at the emotional level, according to some opinions[1]). It's worth to remember that Europe had been, by far and large, the bloodiest Continent in the world[2].

Several forces gathered, in the Forties, to push Western Europeans into a closer relationship. One of them came from the East, where the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a powerful winner of the Second World War, represented a menace, taking in consideration its expansionist ideology and its fierce opposition to the economic market (or capitalist) system[3]. Another push came from the other side of the Atlantic, since the United States, having a definite interest in having safe and

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[1] So BENGOETXEA, Joxerramon: *La Europa Peter Pan. El constitucionalismo europeo en la encrucijada*, Oñati, Instituto Vasco de Administración Pública = Herri-Arduralaritzaren Euskal Erakundea, 2005, pp. 29-30. We disagree about the emergence of meaningful European feelings.

[2] See SOTILLO LORENZO, José Ángel: "La Unión Europea y sus cincuenta años como actor de la cooperación internacional para el desarrollo", in ALDECOA LUZÁRRAGA, F., et al. (coords.): *Los Tratados de Roma en su cincuenta aniversario. Perspectivas desde la Asociación Española de Profesores de Derecho Internacional y Relaciones Internacionales*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2008, pp. 1403-1413, p. 1407.

[3] See GARCÍA-DOBARCO GONZÁLEZ, Bruno: "Unión Europea, Política Exterior y Constitución", in ÁLVAREZ CONDE, E., GARRIDO MAYOL, V. and GARCÍA COUSO, S. (coord.): *Comentarios a la Constitución Europea*, Vol. III, ÁLVAREZ CONDE, E. and GARRIDO MAYOL, V. (coord.): *Políticas comunitarias. Las finanzas de la Unión*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch, 2004, pp. 1297-1330, p. 1316.

prosperous European Allies (for strategic and economical reasons), understood that such situation would be impossible if divisions persisted among the latter; so, the North-Americans engendered a plan to assemble Europeans, "obliging" them to jointly administer (according to the market system rules) a colossal amount of money furnished by the United States (in the framework of the so-called Marshall Plan, officially designated as "European Recovery Program"); all that, underlying their ultimate project for the reconstruction of a German Army[4]. One other push resulted from the very insight, by the most important European States' leaders, that Europe had no better outcome than join efforts, to regain a saying in a definitely transformed World: the defeat of the nationalist positions, together with the international triumph of the free trade doctrines (with exception of the Socialist Blocs) required market dimensions far beyond the size of the very biggest European countries; so, it looks legitimate to say that, at least in simple factual terms, the European were compelled to live really together and not merely side by side[5].

Nevertheless, other trends opposed such way. The scars or a recent devastating war were still too present in the minds of the remainders. In France, particularly, the feelings towards their German neighbors were somewhat mixed, namely due to general persistent fears[6], thus leading to a difficult situation in terms of political stability[7]. The sensation of opposite interests among Europeans (speaking in general terms) was pressing and constraining. Furthermore, the

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[4] See HERRERO DE LA FUENTE, Alberto A.: "La política europea de seguridad y defensa", in RAMÓN CHORNET, C. (coord.): *Derechos y libertades ante las nuevas amenazas a la seguridad global*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch: Publications de Universitat de Valencia, 2005, pp. 79-130, p. 82.

[5] The amplification of a market's dimension represents the very economic core of the international economic integration's concept. But, as to what concerns Europe, the "Founding Fathers" envisaged also, in the long run, a political side of things, consisting in an overall union among Europeans.

[6] See SLOAN, Stanley R.: *NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community: The Transatlantic Bargain Reconsidered*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, p. 35.

[7] See TAYLOR, Paul Graham: *The End of European Integration: Anti-Europeanism Examined*, Oxon; New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 165.

Europeans saw their Continent literally cut apart by the so-called "Iron Curtain", thus accentuating a sensation of something definitely lost, with Eastern Europeans embracing ideals completely opposed to their Western neighbors. Some Western Europeans turned their eyes to the United States, seeing in North-Americans their saviors and feeling closer to them than to their European mates; the American culture invaded Europe, carrying in it the glamour of a safe, free, rich and caring Superpower, in sharp contrast to a loser, poor and destroyed Europe.

It's no wonder that things happened that way. The European territory was the "residence" of many disparate peoples, with differences in terms of history, traditions, language, religion, race, wealth, ways of living, objectives, etc.[8] In the Medieval Era, the Roman Catholic Church's influence brought a certain degree of cohesion among Western Europeans, representing in some way a continuation of the disappeared Western Roman Empire. But the so-called Reform Movement disrupted such continuity, initiating a trend which became accentuated and consolidated by the meanwhile emerging European Nation-States. So, the advent of nationalisms was a consequence of the barriers built up by the meanwhile born European Nation-States, in order to ascertain and strengthen their political power. The Nations' ingredients formed the basis on which such barriers were build; and these ones, by their turn, helped to foster already existing differentiations, thus assuring a separate living of neighbor peoples. European nationalisms were nothing else, after all, than an exalted consequence of an imposed course of distinctively marked individual paths.

The European integration was born upon this quite complex background. More than sixty years have gone by, sine it's beginning, with several and persistent ups and downs, together with a considerable bunch of new facts; so, it's by all means legitimate to put and try to ask a disturbing central question: after all, in what terms should European integration be considered as a success or a failure? Does

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[8] It's almost a commonplace to underline that the differences remain; see, for all, URREA CORRES, Mariola: *La cooperación reforzada en la Unión Europea: concepto, naturaleza y régimen jurídico*, Madrid, Colex, 2002, p. 27.

integration represent a way worth carrying on, or does the time already gone imply that the original dreams of the European "Founding Fathers" are impossible, or simply not worth of, a further materialization?

## 2   The Initial Design of European Integration: "Negative Integration"

The whole economic integration of Western Europe began to correspond to the model known as negative integration. By this, it's meant that the involved joint effort of the participants consisted initially in removing obstacles to individual liberties (companies and workers), rather than in building mechanisms of joint actions or ventures.

And this had several reasons behind: some of an historical nature and others of substantial nature. Historically speaking, it's not strange to it the fact that, after an initial euphoria, the integration movement suffered remarkable setbacks. From a substantive point of view, negative integration is easier to perform, while generating less resistance.

The evolution of European integration has been somewhat irregular, with advances and retreats. But, above these features, stands the fact that everything has evolved in a backdrop frame of formal progression (or deepening) of integration. In other words: without being linear, the integration's trend seems to have been one of progress. Avoiding details, it suffices to say that, to the three common policies contained in the original version of the Treaty on the European Economic Community (common agricultural policy, common transport policy and common commercial policy), were later formally added, under the Single European Act, some new policies (regional policy, research and technological development policy, together with environmental policy).

It's a fact that, globally speaking, the fate of international economic integration hasn't matched many of the hopes put in it, what leads to this question: which are the reasons for the success occurred with Western Europe's integration? And

that's an interrogation all the more interesting, as it's certain that abound the factors pointing (at least at first sight) towards the likely failure of such commitment.

In the brief following text, we begin by lining up what we consider as unfavorable factors to the deepening of European integration; then we will shift to the pressuring vectors of such integration; and we will end enunciating some new coordinates capable of having an influence on the current pace of the integration process.

## 3    Vectors Opposing to the Deepening of European Integration

In what concerns factors which oppose the deepening of European integration, there are, for one hand, *language barriers*; and it's well known that language is a powerful unifying factor. Being the primary means of direct communication among men, language becomes essential to strengthen relationships whenever they exceed the situations of incipient coexistence. Spoken language (as well as written language, of course) plays a key role in today's Society; illiteracy is a curse for those who are affected by it, precisely due to the ubiquity of spoken and written information: the illiterate has a difficulty or an impossibility to act in an environment where he can't be autonomous. Language is a vehicle of a cultural tradition, which identifies the members of a certain group; its function, as carrier of an idea of "social body", is so important that we see certain social strata use specific linguistic terms, which they preserve (and sometimes even accentuate) in a clear demarcation of a specific identity (see the case of the "language" of certain young people's groups, of certain regions, of certain professions, etc.). Europe is a "flap of languages": in a small geographic area, a wide variety of them exists (with the consequent feelings of extraneousness thus caused); and the fact that many Europeans know how to express themselves in a (European) language other than their mother language, only partially circumvents the "language barrier": if, by that way, become possible certain contacts that would otherwise be impossible, the

above mentioned disintegrating factor doesn't cease to operate[9]. Compared with other States that have engaged in integration processes, Europe incurs, relating to this matter, in a sharp disfavor; not to go further, just remember Latin America (a Subcontinent with only two significant official languages) or Central America (where a single language pontificates).

In the sequence of the group of vectors opposed to further European integration, we hesitated a bit before listing the *intra-European history of wars*. In fact, notwithstanding our framing option, we don't forget that the first great impulse underlying European integration was the scenario of a recently ended war; nor do we forget that the main objective was to culminate in a situation of "intra-European peace"[10]. War is the ultimate expression of disunity, opposition, confrontation; and the tradition of European States was a long tradition of wars[11], with intervals of time (always precarious and "arranged") almost invariably "pre" or "post-war". Besides, European wars were not the expression of peoples fighting for their union or unification: they were, most invariably, expressions of intransigence of some peoples against others; and no exception were the dreams of intra-European expansion, for (to name the paradigmatic examples of Napoleon or Hitler) it's easy to see that their envisaged union was a "union of subjugation", ie a political unification of the type "conquest" or "domination of winners over losers" (in sum, there were no desires for fusions of nations or even for the merging of interests).

There is, furthermore and at last, a strong *tradition of independence of European States*. It's easily understandable that a greater habituation to a full political autonomy implies a much greater difficulty to embark in an international

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[9] See FORET, François: "L'Europe entre banalisation et réinstitutionnalisation", in MAGNETTE, P., and WEYEMBERGH, A. (eds.): *L'Union européenne: la fin d'une crise?*, Bruxelles, Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2008, pp. 25-33, p. 27.

[10] It's a well acknowledge fact: see, for all, WATTS, Duncan: *The European Union*, Edinburg, Edinburg University Press, 2008, p. 277.

[11] On the most various grounds and dimensions: see PIRIS, Jean-Claude: *El Tratado Constitucional para Europa: un análisis jurídico*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, Cátedra Internacional OMC/Integración Regional, 2006, p. 29.

integration's process. The peoples who form the present European States have more or less marked autonomic or independence traditions, in some cases dating back for centuries; and, unlike other Continents (as Africa or South America), the boundaries of the Old Continent's States are the will's result of European peoples themselves, rather than of strange peoples (settlers or conquerors)[12]. Europe's image as a "mosaic" of political spaces didn't appear only today or yesterday; and it should be noted that the very economic integration, when carried to a certain depth degree, has always political implications (it's not even exaggerated to affirm, that an economic union will go side by side with a political union). The "independence tradition" reigning in Europe is, thus, another "centrifugal" factor.

## 4   Vectors Favoring European Integration

Considering now the realities which favor European integration, it ought to be noted that one of the factors, usually appointed as a rationale (or benefit) of an international economic integration's process, is the inherent existence of a vast space open to the activities of economic agents. And this, because today's economic production (a successor of the handmade production era) becomes so much more profitable, as so larger the number of potential buyers (consumers) of the final product; the nowadays economies of scale provide decreases in production risks, make possible cost savings through improved distribution channels, bring the possibility of technological innovation and the feasibility of projects which require greater capital investment, imply a guarantee or a high probability of greater profits, etc. Large industries, or "tip" industries, are only possible or feasible in a "macro-market". Well, the *size of the integrated European market* (the European Union market), with its millions of citizens (consumers), fulfills those characteristics; and this drives undoubtedly the European integration,

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[12] It's worth reminding that, during and after the ill-fated episode of the European Defense Community (occurred in last century's middle), each European State continued to prevail itself largely of the legal power to manage with broad independence its own defense needs.

because the inherent feasibility of large companies leads to the blurring of boundaries and to the dynamics of the great economic European space, in a process expected to self-feed.

As second among the favoring factors, we refer to the *economic level of the participant States* of the European integration process. It isn't conceivable, in a country economically poor, the emergence of powerful business structures; but, more than that, the high economic level of the States involved in the launching of the European integration process had other implications. Among such implications, consideration is given to the perfection aspects of the economic mechanisms (stressing these because they seem the most important). Developed States have improved economic structures: there are good distribution channels; the information given to economic agents is ready and effective; the tax system has no distorting or perverse effects; the banking circuits (and generally speaking credit) are varied, important and dynamic; there are conditions for proper implementation of economic policies; etc. In order to be successful, a complex integration process can't do without good technical conditions for the implementation of the necessary measures; and these technical-economic conditions abounded, and are still present, in the European Union's States[13]. This, notwithstanding that the successive adhesion of less developed States has considerably diminished the initial situation, namely when a bunch of Eastern ex-socialist European States adhered simultaneously to the Union. In fact, despite these States' willingness to adopt the market economy model (with all the inherent efforts) and the relatively high skills of their populations, such States can't keep up with the development level of most of their Western partner States, thus representing, for the time being, an important challenge to the European Union.

In the third place of the favoring circumstances, we list the *security and defense* factor, taking into account immediately that there was, on the basis of the European integration process, a desire to preserve peace: the first European

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[13] See HENARES CUELLAR, Ignacio: "Patrimonio Europeo", in SALINAS DE FRÍAS, A. (coord.): *Estudios europeos*, Vol. I, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch, 2007, pp. 79-94, p. 80.

Community (the European Coal and Steel Community) was born precisely in order to pool the production of the most important material, at that time, for security and defense purposes; so, France and Germany (traditionally enemies) could hardly go back to being on different sides of the barricade[14]. But, beyond the Franco-German peace, another threat to security and defense befell Europe, for the Cold War showed Europeans how much they were at mercy of the United States' nuclear protection, namely through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization[15]: so, notwithstanding the failure of the European Defense Community, remained the fact that a setback in European integration could only mean an even greater vulnerability to external aggressions; the Europeans knew it, they know it, and we believe that this circumstance has been also acting as a kind of glue (or at least as anti-disruptive) of the European integration process. The European Union has undoubtedly the precious merit of having transformed a part of Europe, the bloodiest Continent in historical terms, in what may be qualified as an almost perfect lake of peace, where Member States resolve their disagreements at negotiation tables, through often difficult, sensitive and demanding diplomatic marathons[16]. Buried are the horrors of World War II (an European war transposed to the global scale), so that, at present, it seems more than unlikely any armed conflict opposing Union's Member States, which even collaborate with one another in various matters of the security and defense field[17]. But there isn't the same peaceful environment in the rest of the World, where international conflicts did not

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[14] See BRETHERTON, Charlotte, and VOGLER, John: *The European Union as a Global Actor*, 2nd ed., London; New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 193.

[15] Up to nowadays, the role of the United States, with regard to the defense of Europe, has never ceased to be present; see for instance REMIRO BROTÓNS, Antonio: "¿Qué ha significado el Tratado de Ámsterdam para la PESC?", *Gaceta jurídica de la CE*, septiembre 1998, D-29, pp. 71-104, p. 100.

[16] See for instance LARA FERNÁNDEZ, Belén: "¿Es necesaria una defensa antimisiles europea?", in AAVV, *Retos a la consolidación de la Unión Europea*, Monografías del CESEDEN, N. 54, Madrid, Ministerio de Defensa, 2002, pp. 145-172, p. 162.

[17] See LOBO-FERNANDES, Luís: "A Europa Aberta e a Integração Continental", in SILVEIRA, A. (coord.): *50 anos do Tratado de Roma*, Lisboa, Quid Juris, 2007, pp. 9-14, pp. 12 and 14.

diminish, having in fact emerged new dangers completely unknown until recently, or at least unknown as to their high scale level. International dangers constitute also, naturally, threats to the European Union, which has essentially relied, for its safety and protection, on the military protection provided by the United States. Such dependence, however, has led the European Union to a precarious position, thus representing an objective problem for the very Union and its citizens (even if these ones, or at least some of them, are unaware of this situation's gravity)[18]. But, on the other hand, one has to take in account the national importance of the very sensitive field of security and defense, which lies at the core of the States' sovereignty. For this reason, the Union's Member States have dealt hardly with all these issues, particularly since, even in the middle of last century, the failed attempt to create a European Defense Community turned the theme of a collective autonomous European defense into a taboo subject[19]. However, the awareness of the Union's fragility on these matters, associated with the improvement of the living conditions within the Union, led the European leaders to a new solution: in the recent Lisbon Treaty has had formal consecration, among other initiatives, a possible embryo of a future autonomous security and defense policy of the Union, by means of an instrument called permanent structured cooperation.[20]

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[18] See GUTIÉRREZ ESPADA, Cesáreo: "El Tratado de Ámsterdam (1997) y la defensa de Europa", in PELÁEZ MARÓN, J. M. (dir.), CASADO RAIGÓN, R., and HINOJO ROJAS, M. (coord.): *Cuestiones Actuales de Derecho Comunitario Europeo*, Vol. IV, Cordoba, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Cordoba, 1998, pp. 157-175, p. 171.

[19] See DEVUYST, Youri: *The European Union Transformed: Community Method and Institutional Evolution from the Schuman Plan to the Constitution for Europe*, Brussels, New York, Peter Lang, 2005, p. 156.

[20] On the overall evolution of security and defense in the European integration process, see LAUREANO, Abel: "Um Esboço da Evolução da Segurança e Defesa no Processo de Integração Europeia", *Revista Científica Sensus: Direito*, Janeiro-Junho 2013, Vol. I, N. 6, pp. 77-89, accessed January 13, 2014, in <http://200.146.104.216:3000/UNINORTE/REVISTA-DIREITO/index.php/sensus/article/download/93/82>; specifically on permanent structured cooperation, LAUREANO, Abel: "No Rumo da 'Comunitarização' da Segurança e Defesa da União Europeia mediante a Cooperação Estruturada Permanente?", *Lex Humana*, Jul.-Dez. 2012, Vol. 4, N. 2, pp. 1-16, accessed January 13, 2014, in

Finally, we label as *"rational" or "intellectual"* factor the Europeans' idea of the existence of advantages in the integration process[21]. Such advantages can distribute themselves roughly into three domains: the security and defense one, the political one and the economical one; since we made reference, in the previous Point, to the area of security and defense, we will confine ourselves now to the remaining fields. Let's consider firstly the economic field: the Europeans are aware of the benefits of the economies of scale, for they know it's impossible to try to compete, in today's world, based on production units geared to small markets; they know that only a vast market can allow Europe to rub shoulders with the big economic today's potentates. In political terms, the advantage of Europe's unity is also perceived by the Europeans' eyes: in a world of Superpowers, only that path can allow Europe to affirm itself, that is, to make its voice heard. It's time to add, in the third place, the rational factor of the integration's political advantages idea takes place (or, better said, is based) upon a genuine political stability of the participant States; such stability is indispensable, moreover, to the feasibility of any envisaged international integration.

## 5   New Coordinates

It's now the time to consider some new coordinates relevant for our theme, the first one being the *German reunification*. When this fact occurred, people wondered in what sense it would point. At that time, the Europeans were still too much "on top" of this phenomenon and thus unable to have a comprehensive perspective angle; it seems, nevertheless, that the idea that things couldn't possibly remain as

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<http://seer.ucp.br/seer/index.php?journal=LexHumana&page=article&op=view&path[]=249&path[]=182>.

[21] See BRIGOT, André: "Les limites géographiques et politiques de l'Europe", in KLEIN, J., BUFFOTOT, P., and VILBOUX, N. (dir.): *Vers une politique européenne de sécurité et de défense: défis et opportunités*, Actes du colloque organisé les 15-16 juin 2001 par le Centre de Relations Internationales et de Stratégie (Université de Paris I), Paris, Economica, 2003, pp. 55-87, p. 70.

they were, was largely dominant[22]. Anyway, and underlying only two threads, we note that, in 1991, had already arisen accusations of French companies against the former German Federal Republic, claiming that the latter, in default of the Community spirit, was barring them the access to the economic space of the former German Democratic Republic; and people wondered whether this would represent any harbinger of future frictions, eventually extensible to other domains and to another level. To date, however, the economic power of the former German Federal Republic had led to being less felt, in today's united Germany, the "weight" of the input of its former less developed economic space; so it looks reasonable to ponder that, things kept in such way, German reunification will tend to be a neutral factor in the framework of European integration. But these thoughts are located in the economic field, in which still stands essentially Europe's integration; nevertheless, such integration points increasingly to a political dimension, over which it was, in those times, particularly risky to engage in futurism (although the *status quo* seemed to be neutral, in terms of being a "centripetal" or "centrifugal" factor for European integration). The fact is however that, some years past the German reunification, an imbalance has emerged as to the relative equilibrium between France and Germany, the countries upon which the essentials of the European integration process were founded; and that imbalance, after all, came quickly to be predictable[23]; and many people wonder, nowadays, which can be the outcome of such imbalance, taking into account the well-known differences that, in several terms, separate (or oppose) the French to the Germans; anyway, whatever that outcome (which seems strictly unpredictable), no signs appear, for the time being, of the feasibility of a new kind of equilibrium.

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[22] See SEABRA, Maria-João: "L'opinion publique face aux développements de la PESC", in DURAND, M-F., and VASCONCELOS, Á. (dir.): *La PESC: ouvrir l'Europe au monde*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 1998, pp. 175-192, p. 177.

[23] See LAFFAN, Brigid, and STUBB, Alexander: "Member States", in BOMBERG, E., and STUBB, A. (eds.): *The European Union: How Does it Work?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 69-87, p. 72.

Another new coordinate is the role of the *Eastern European States*. The events occurred in these States, at the time of the Soviet Union's implosion, brought a whole new framework to international relations, especially in what concerned Europe[24]; here, also, became particularly difficult any exercises in futurology. By the time immediately sequent to that implosion, emerged a tendency to think that were definitely over the political-military threats of the Eastern European States, as well as of the Soviet Union itself. But some of the alterations in the Russian political scene repositioned a couple of issues, leading to intriguing questions: would there be any retrogression in the political evolution of Russia? Could the Eastern European States be turned again into "satellites"? Or would they, instead, accelerate their approach to the Western world, in an attempt to a clearer demarcation from Russia? Several other interrogations could be brought to mind, but these are enough to lead to the major questions equated at that time and relevant to this study: would the Eastern Europe States want to be "friendly" to the European Community, in order to strengthen their relations with it or even with eventual purposes of accession to it? Would the Eastern European States be "preferential markets" for Western Europe? Would those States fit as "untapped markets" (due to their weak economic development), thus providing an attractive "expansion space" for the West? Would there be a risk of diversion of west European capitals for investments in Eastern European States, rather than channeling funds for the economic and social cohesion of the Community? All this represented the settlement of new coordinates, which only future could tell to what extent would represent centrifugal or centripetal forces (if not neutral) for the Western Europe integration process, or even generate a wider process of integration (involving all Europe). This, not to add that those States' accession to the European Union "reordered the Community's geo-political space, making Germany as theoretically accessible to North African immigration as was Spain"[25].

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[24] See for instance ALDECOA LUZÁRRAGA, Francisco: "Avances de la política exterior de la Unión Europea", *Revista de Derecho de la Unión Europea*, 2002, N. 2, pp. 199-224, p. 199.

[25] SMITH, Christopher J., and LAHTEENMAKI, Kaisa: "Europeanization of the Mediterranean Region: The EU's Relations with the Maghreb", in CAFRUNY, A., and PETERS, P. (eds.): The Union

Anyway, and so far, the Eastern European States have shown, generally speaking, a good overall empathy for the European Union; but one must not forget that they are still crossing an adjustment period, where the benefits emerging from their participation in the Union fully counterbalance (considering their previous rough economic conditions) the inherent constraints imposed by the Union's strict discipline.

On the other hand, and at a general level, History has shown that the European integration process has been by no means linear; one can even speak about the *specific ups and downs of the European integration process*[26]. After a promising start, strengthened in last century's Sixties, the beginning of the Seventies brought a cooling in the integration process, precisely at a time when the so-called Crisis Oil of 1973 would predictably have urged Europeans to join forces to deal with it. A division among Member States followed, entering and crawling into the Eighties. Then, a sort of twist has taken place, by means of the Single European Act, which pushed again the integration movement forward. This return to the development of European integration was intensified over the next decade (the Nineties), by the founding of the European Union ("covering" the European Communities and adding some other integration ingredients). But the new millennium started and it seems that the integration spirit returned to wane; up to the point that, at present, many voices believe in the approach of a setback in the integration process, or even in the very implosion of the European Union. There have been, as above referred, cycles of euro-optimism and euro-pessimism, configuring oscillations that open the door to very legitimate questions about the sense of future developments; so things are, except for those who think that the Union's future, replicating its past, will be characterized by successive stages of euro-optimism and euro-pessimism;

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and the World: The Political Economy of a Common European Foreign Policy, The Hague, Boston, Kluwer Law International, 1998, pp. 151-172, p. 168.

[26] Emphatically saying that the oscillations of the European Union "have a habit of throwing up new and unexpected facts that wrong-foot extant theories", HOOGHE, Liesbet, and MARKS, Gary: "European Union?", in GOETZ, K. H., MAIR, P., and SMITH, G. (eds.): *European Politics: Pasts, Presents, Futures*, New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 108-129, p. 123.

this latter thought implies, however and inevitably, two questions: in the first place, how to reconcile such perennial oscillations with the dictate of achieving an ever closer union among the European peoples? And, in the second place, how could such oscillations be reconciled with a World more "globalized" than ever, without an inherent European Union's discredit, of unpredictable contours and consequences?

We end up the equation of the new coordinates by a *brief and daring incursion into the future*, considering the Union as a whole. Underlying our choice, lies the circumstance that the aforementioned lack of linearity of the European integration points, as a perhaps more fruitful method, to try and attempt uncovering some general constraints and/or some paradoxes eventually able to mold the European Union's destiny. We consider that the main ideas underpinning such subject can be summarized in two words: magnitude and difficulty; both concepts lead, in turn, to two basic topics: in external terms, comes the issue of the international scenarios' developments; in internal terms, comes the problem of the European Union's consistency. Starting by the *external* field, ie the international life evolution, it should be pointed out that such evolution may lead the European Union's citizens whether to feel an impulse for a deeper closeness or rather for a gradual (if not blunt) separation. It's thus decisive, due to its possible (or probable) impact in the European Union's consistency, the evolution of the international scenario[27]. Will there be a trend for the global hegemony of large continental (or near-continental) powers, letting on top of the World countries such as the United States or putting also in such position States like Russia, India, China or Brazil?[28] Or, on the other hand and contrary to what seems the current trend, will such States see their role

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[27] See MARTÍNEZ PARICIO, Jesús Ignacio: "El reflejo de la política de seguridad y defensa en la ciudadanía europea", in PALOMARES LERMA, G. (ed.): *Política de seguridad de la Unión Europea: realidades y retos para el siglo XXI*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch, 2002, pp. 57-76, p. 73.

[28] See VASCONCELOS, Álvaro de (ed.): "A strategy for EU foreign policy", *European Union Institute for Security Studies: Reports*, June 2010, N. 7, namely Russia (pp. 47-49), India (pp. 72-74), China (pp. 70-71) and Brazil (pp. 75-77), accessed January 14, 2014, in <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/A_strategy_for_EU_foreign_policy.pdf>.

decreased, eventually "maneuvered" or "controlled" (perhaps covertly) by atomistic entities albeit highly powerful (e.g., in the form of multinational financial conglomerates and/or other branches), thus removing one of the advantages underlying the emergence and development of the international integration's phenomena (namely the markets' expansion of the participating States)?

In what concerns the European Union's *internal* level, it appears that the main equating constraints are of cultural and economic nature. The *cultural* ties among Europeans have remained at a fairly low level[29]. For their part, the Governments' actions of the Union's Member States have been quite tibia in the cultural field, and various cultural manifestations remain centered in the Member States themselves: realities as historical culture, education, language, politics or daily living (even as to minor things or small habits), continue to strive for their reference to national standards, in a range of differences to which no significant European dimension has been added, mostly due to resistances of the Member States themselves[30]. Bearing in mind that the cultural substrate is the most powerful factor in social bonding (or, more accurately said, the typical strength of the constituent mortar of any Humane Society)[31], the European Union's future will inevitably be linked to the way how cultural dimension (taken in a broad sense) will evolve. So far, European integration has been carried out in a substantially bureaucratic way, by means of general and specific top-down approaches[32], with the European Union outlining some policies, even including a cultural policy, though very modest in extent and

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[29] See ZIELONKA, Jan: "Should Europe Become a State? A Neo-Medieval Solution", in LEONARD, D., and LEONARD, M. (eds.): *The Pro-European Reader*, Houndmills, Palgrave, 2002, pp. 177-186, p. 184.

[30] See MAGNETTE, Paul: *What is the European Union: Nature and Prospects*, Houndmills, MacMillan, 2005, p. 33.

[31] See MARTÍN REBOLLO, Luis: "La Unión Europea y la Cultura", in DÍEZ DE VELASCO VALLEJO, M. (ed.), *La Unión Europea tras la reforma*, Santander, Universidad de Cantabria — Parlamento de Cantabria, 2000, pp. 127-145, p. 131.

[32] See GUEHENNO, Jean-Marie: "A Foreign Policy in Search of a Polity", in ZIELONKA, J. (ed.): *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy*, The Hague, Boston, Kluwer Law International, 1998, pp. 25-34, p. 32.

projection[33]. An apparent ignorance or indifference, from the Union's public authorities, as to a real promotion of a bottom-up European culture (instead of an enforced one), will tend to keep things as they are, or even contribute to a further alienation of citizens of the Union's Member States in relation to the nationals of the other Member States. By contrast, a genuine attention and deepening of the cultural dimension of the European Union will naturally tend to contribute to a strengthening of the integration process.[34]

With regard to the *economic* field, there are persistent and notorious imbalances within the European Union[35]. In any integrated area, furthermore, the development differences among regions tend to worsen, if not countered or compensated by rebalancing measures[36]. Recent times have accentuated, in the European Union, the gaps among the richest and the disadvantaged regions. If this trend continues, might be predictable a progressive dilution of the tenuous bonds which still maintain some connection among the Union's citizens, particularly the Southern States' Europeans (who have been experiencing a growing impoverishment in their living conditions, in comparison to the more developed Western Northern States). Instead, if a trend of gradual attenuation of disparities, with a more egalitarian distribution of wealth within the Union, were to occur, could be predictable (as consequential) a greater identification of the Member States' nationals, particularly the poorest, with the Union's project.

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[33] See KÜHNHARDT, Ludger: *European Union — The Second Founding: The Changing Rationale of European Integration*, Baden-Baden, Nomos, 2008, p. 430.

[34] On the cultural dimension of the European Union, see LAUREANO, Abel: "Cultura e Património Cultural da União Europeia: Realidades ou Ficções do Direito?", *Relações Internacionais no Mundo Atual*, 2013, Vol. 2, N. 18, pp. 6-19, accessed January 13, 2014, in <http://revista.unicuritiba.edu.br/index.php/RIMA/article/view/728/554>.

[35] See GRANADO HIJELMO, Ignacio: "Europa en un momento constituyente: el Proyecto de Constitución para la Unión Europea", *Anuario Jurídico de La Rioja*, 1995, N. 1, pp. 127-169, pp. 144-145, accessed January 15, 2014, in <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/261748.pdf>.

[36] See PORTO, Manuel Carlos Lopes: *Teoria da Integração e Políticas Comunitárias*, 4ª ed., Coimbra, Almedina, 2009, pp. 408-409.

## 6   Conclusions

The European integration was launched in a context of a "must": the Europeans were pressed to join their efforts and forget their oppositions, in order to be able to survive to a very hostile environment. With no resources (devastated by the Second World War), under the Soviet expansionism's menace, under the United States pressure to definitely abandon nationalisms and gather energies for the rebuilding of the Old Continent, and with no alternatives at sight, Western Europeans embarked in the new experience of an international integration.

Due to the very novelty of such endeavor and the fragilities of the Europeans at the time, the initial design of that new phase of European living was designed as a "negative integration", this meaning that its main purpose was to put away the barriers that had been dividing Europeans, thus allowing the emergence of a common market, based on the principles of free initiative and open collaboration among the then integrated States.

Despite the fact that European integration began according to the model of "negative integration", the purpose underlying that process was the desire of an ever closer union among Europeans, which should take place as quickly as the indispensable requirements were met. There was a notion that it wouldn't be an easy process, and those prospects carried eventually a fair dose of faith in a future positive evolution.

The reality is that, decades after, several vectors continue to oppose themselves to a marked deepening of the European integration's process. The Europeans continue to exhibit many differences among them, so that the Union is commonly seen as a kind of abstract superstructure, which is more "tolerated" than really "wanted".

On the other hand, this fact doesn't deny the existence of vectors favoring European integration. And, so far, these vectors have even prevailed, not allowing

an implosion of the European Union, despite the many problems that the Union has had to deal with and continues to face.

The new coordinates that came into play didn't have, up to now and so far as one can guess, a profound effect on the basic circumstances that have conditioned, from the outset, the adventure of the European integration. Those circumstances remain substantially unchanged, and can be summed up by saying that the Europeans haven't achieved the necessary spirit of unity for guarantying a fairly certainty in the Union's indissolubility[37]. It remains to be seen whether they will attain such spirit or, like what happened to other peoples' mixtures throughout History, will finish by creating a new perpetually instable reality, if not by putting an end to the very Union, in a revival or newly designed wave of nationalisms.

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[37] In order to deal with the differences that separate and sometimes even frantically oppose Union's Member States, there has been created a legal mechanism called enhanced cooperation, which doesn't appear, so far, to be able of solving the basic problems underlying European integration. Besides, that mechanism can have an intersection with fundamental rights, with a possibility of collisions between both realities (LAUREANO, Abel: "As Cooperações Reforçadas e os Direitos Fundamentais na União Europeia", *Derecho y Cambio Social*, 2013, Año 9, N. 30, accessed January 13, 2014, in <http://www.derechoycambiosocial.com/revista030/cooperacion_y_derechos_fundamentales.pdf>). On the essentials of this mechanism, see LAUREANO, Abel: "Dificuldades e Soluções (ou Pseudo-Soluções) da Integração: A 'Cooperação Reforçada' Europeia, Mecanismo de Integração ou nova Forma de mera Cooperação Internacional?", *International Law: Revista Colombiana de Derecho Internacional*, enero-junio 2011, N. 18, pp. 191-212.

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