

Committee: Council of EU Ministers

Issue: The question of integrating into an ever-closer Union

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Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Joanna Politi and I am an IB1 student in HAEF Psychico College. I have the honour of serving as the Deputy President of the Council of EU Ministers in the 2nd DSTMUN. This will be my 9th conference overall, and I am looking forward to meeting each and every one of you. I will try my best to help you at all times, and to ensure a smooth operation of the committee

The Council of EU Ministers is a very important institution in which EU member states are represented by national ministers that meet to adopt laws and coordinate policies. This document is going to be an introduction to one of the topics of the EU Council, namely “The question of integrating into an ever-closer Union”, meaning the unification of the European people as the original treaty of 1957 explicitly states. This study guide will provide you with the necessary information to begin your journey in this topic and help you understand the basic principles of the matter in question. Bellow, you will find the necessary information, such as definition of terms, countries involved and their stances and a summary of all the important events that have taken place so far. Please be reminded that this should not be your sole source of information and must serve as an introduction to your research and hopefully will provide motivation for your further research into the topic.

Lastly, I would like to remind you that I will always be available for any questions regarding the topic, both prior and during the conference and would be eager to help you with your research. If questions of any sort regarding the topic arise, you can contact me via email (ioannapoliti@gmail.com), I would be glad to help.

Best regards,

Joanna Politi.

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The issue of an ever-closer union has been debated since 1957, when it was mentioned in the preamble of the Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Community (EEC), one of the predecessors of the EU. It has oftentimes been a point of argumentation in the European Union, the meaning of which has always been ambiguous. With regards to recent events, such as Brexit, this issue is of at-most importance, as the unification of Europe is needed when facing such ground-breaking changes.

The debate of this issue revolves around many concerns over the national sovereignty of each member state, and European integration. An ever-closer union is desired because of some benefits that it will bring. There are talks all throughout Europe about this union and how it is the only solution for Europe to compete in this “multipolar world” that we currently inhabit¹. So, there is an ongoing debate amongst people on how to act.

With one side advocating such union, the issue is considered as a benefit for all countries involved. The other side of the debate supports that such an agreement between countries would harm their cultural heritage and would not benefit them. The concepts of the United States of Europe and Euroscepticism are also heavily involved in this debate. But, perhaps the most important factor is to make the distinction between an ever-closer union and European Integration, as they are often mistaken to be the same.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

European Economic Community

The European Economic Community was a provincial association which planned to achieve financial incorporation among its part states. It was made by the Treaty of Rome of 1957.

Ever-closer union

The concept of the complete cooperation of all people of the European Union inspired by the two World Wars that plagued Europe.

European integration

The arrangement of the European states into the closest association, which has acquired many of the characteristics of statehood.

¹ <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2018/02/EPB49.pdf?type=pdf>

Brexit

An abbreviation used for the possibility of Britain exiting the European Union.

Populism

A political approach of which the ideas aim to please the masses and targets the societal position of such classes with the aim of gaining power.

Euroscepticism

A political approach that advocates the withdrawal from the European Union.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Distinction between an ever-closer Union and European integration

The issue of the so-called “United States of Europe” is one that has been a constant debate among political parties and countries. With the concept of euroscepticism at rise, and phenomenon such as Brexit, the debate is as ever-growing. The basis of the concept behind the creation of the “United States of Europe” is the creation of a statehood that closely resembles to the United States of America. Parties such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP), are strong advocates of euroscepticism and are strongly against the creation of the “United States of Europe”. The anti-United States of Europe advocating parties argue on the basis that each country is unique and should preserve their identity. With globalization increasing daily, this integration is believed to be a threat to the individual freedom and cultural identity of each country. Thus, people argue that with the combination of globalization and the creation of such a statehood, countries will not only lose their individual cultural heritage, but will also lose the freedom of guiding their own country.

On the other hand, advocates that are pro-United States of Europe argue that such a creation is the only approach that will help achieve total economic success, and would offer a more transparent, democratic, strong and accountable EU that would end the fable cycle of bureaucracy. Thus, when talking about an ever-closer European Union, we are not talking about a politically, economically and overall integrated statehood. We are talking about the co-beneficial cooperation of each country’s economic policies and people, so as to form an inter-country alliance. This cooperation would bring benefits not only to economical aspects, but also to international security across the Union. This ever-closer union would entail a complete and utter cooperation between states, and not the political and cultural integration of them.

Euro Economic Crisis

The Euro Economic Crisis is a debt-crisis that has spanned for several years. The emergency began in 2009, when the world originally acknowledged Greece was in a crisis. In three years, it swelled into the potential for sovereign obligation defaults from Portugal, Italy, Ireland, and Spain. This was a fatal threat for the European Union, making many countries question the value of the Euro. Its consequences still manifest, an example being Greece and its struggles to “survive”, as well as its buffer towards achieving economic growth. This was combated by passing the seven-point plan that Germany’s Prime Minister introduced, as well as an intergovernmental treaty that followed on December 8th, 2011. Since the beginning of the crisis, people have feared the prospect of another one occurring. That’s why many have advocated the concept of the United States of Europe, believing that such a statehood would prevent such a crisis of brewing again. This crisis has been a vital argument for the case of an ever-closer union, as such a union is expected to entail more economic security and cooperation.

Benefits of an ever-closer union

The idea of an ever-closer European Union comes with many benefits. Firstly, regarding the union as a whole, it is seen as a more secure and strong alliance. This is due to the fact that people are protected from physical harm, like for example the outbreaks of armed disputes where they would be further assisted by fellow countries, or economical threats as they will have more security and closer economic ties with the fellow countries involved. Also, such a union would help to minimize the discrimination and hatred that exists among countries and their people, offering a closer bond, which would unify them and change their perspectives upon the matter. Furthermore, such a union is believed to have strong economic benefits, as well as free trade agreements that would benefit all economies immensely, and would offer a first look, upon a path that could be explored in an international level. Also, such an ever-closer union would provide economic security to all countries, no matter their economic stability and state.

Disadvantages of an ever-closer union

Despite the advantages that are believed to come with such an ever-closer union, it is argued that there are disadvantages that would result from the creation of such a Union. The primary concern for such a unification among states is the loss of the individual cultural heritage of countries, as well as their constitution. A main argument is that if such a Union was achieved, individual and cultural heritage amongst countries would not be able to be preserved. This fear of losing individual culture is a major obstacle for the creation of an ever-closer union, as it seen as a threat towards the preservation of the individual cultural heritage of each country.

Also, for some countries this economic security that is advertised would be far from ideal, as they would be burdened by other countries and their economic responsibilities. For instance, the economic stability that Greece lacks, would affect negatively other economically prosperous countries.

Lastly, when integrating in such a way, the boundaries are blurry. Thus, many people are afraid that the lack of a definite definition of an ever-closer European Union could result in the loss of the political power of a country as well as its freedom to lead and govern its population.

Rise of Populism in Europe and the concept of Euro-scepticism

Some people are disappointed by the current governments, striving towards more extreme approaches towards the right-wing extremism parties. This rise in right-wing extremism is directly correlated to a rise of populism in Europe. These two, stand as a direct obstacle to the creation of an ever-closer European Union. Such right-wing extremism is evident by the results of the 2019 European Elections, as there were more right-wing extremist parties than ever elected into the European Parliament. This rise can be attributed to many factors, such as the effect that the refugee and terrorist crisis have had on people and their homes. When terrorist attacks are commonly happening, people usually start to fear something foreign, transforming their hospitality to hostility. Aggravated by current governments, they strive towards extreme parties in hopes of finding a solution to their problems. This rise of populism and euroscepticism does not match with the pursuit of an ever-closer union, as it cannot be achieved when hatred and separatism plague Europe and pit countries against each other.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

United Kingdom

With Brexit, the United Kingdom is a country majorly involved in this issue. Specifically, the UK has always been vocal on their opinions of such an approach to the European Union. An example to that are the statements made by the UK's former Prime Minister, David Cameron, who openly denied such a union, stating that the UK does not desire to be part of such a prospect. This is further supported through the referendum that was voted, stating that the UK desires Brexit to happen.

Germany

Germany has always been one of the major powers of Europe that has played an imperative role in its path. With its fair share of right-wing parties elected such as

the Alternative for Germany (AfD), which advocates stricter immigration policies and is an anti-euro party, Germany is a country heavily involved in this issue. Such far-right extremist influences would prohibit the creation of an ever-closer union, but Germany is not swayed towards that way, and remains a strong supporter of the EU.

France

France is also a strong force in the European Union. Its influence is very important for the course of the ever-closer union and it also has some far right extremist parties that have risen along with populism levels. This was heavily affected by the terrorist attacks that were plaguing Europe and especially France, making people fear anything foreign.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
January 6, 1941	Four Freedoms
March 25, 1957	Treaty of Rome
19 June 1983	Solemn Declaration on European Union
14 June 1985	Schengen Agreement
26 June 2016	Referendum for Brexit

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Treaty of Rome

This was the treaty that basically formed the basis for the creation of the European Union, on March 25, 1957.

Solemn Declaration on European Union

This declaration was signed by the heads of the states to affirm their efforts towards an ever closer union among the peoples and Member States of the European Community.

Schengen Agreement

This agreement was signed in 1985, and creates an area of 26 European States where people can travel passport-free in mutual borders between states and border control of all kinds has also been abolished in such borders.

Brexit

Brexit is the “exit” of Britain from the European Union, something that was decided by a referendum that the UK’s citizens voted in 2016.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

In favour of an ever-closer Union such as election campaigns

Attempts such as campaigns, conventions, seminar and keynote speeches raising awareness are always happening to help inform people about this topic. A prime example is the “This time I’m voting” campaign, which wanted to motivate young people to participate in this year’s elections. Such attempts are happening continuously as we can see from the particular campaign which a month before the European elections was particularly popular, and are helping inform people about this issue. Another attempt to solve this issue is through programs such as the European Youth Parliament, which aims to involve the youth into the processes of the European Parliament.

Furthermore, the creation of the Schengen area, back in 1985, was an attempt to unify the European Union, creating convenience for the travel and an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and trust amongst states. Lastly, the constant protection of the Four Freedoms creating the European Single market (free movement of goods, capital, services and labour), is something that is in favour of a close cooperation between states.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

There are numerous solutions to this question. Primary thing that needs to be established is the goal of Europe, that concerns questions such as “Do we want an ever-closer union?” or “Do we want more close relations between countries?”. Furthermore, it is essential that member states cooperate with one another in order to achieve EU’s main goals and decide the effect of the measures they will take in the future. Through discussion, the states must come to a common idea, in which all countries have expressed the measures they are willing to imply, and their set boundaries.

Also, raising awareness programmes that already exist should be further active, as the European Parliament's campaign for the 2019 elections, namely "this time I'm voting". Such programmes, that bring EU citizens together, should be supported by governments. However, the different needs of each state should not determine neither their financial contribution to the EU bodies, nor their power across the Union.

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