

GLOBAL QUESTIONS ON THE OLD CONTINENT

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Abstract

The 21st century's actual problems are all cross-border issues. The economy, security, environmental challenges, minorities, demographic changes; health, food or migration challenges are on our menu. Global questions cannot only be answered by a single country or nation, some regional, continental or global solution can bring lasting solution. Of course, there are a number of obstacles to cooperation: there is no mechanism to assume a common will, a common financing or a decision model. The UN draws attention to its goals in its various programmes, but it is difficult to allocate the necessary resources. The European Union has always moved to the community of nation states and the Federalist Union. The differences in development are still significant to the disadvantage of the later accessed countries, the common market, the labour market is not reporting a welfare breakthrough to the transitioned countries, so their position in solving the problems often does not match the developed- so called core? – EU. The permanent question of modernising the EU is “more or less Europe”. I will examine the reality and the conditions of this.

Keywords: EU, globalization, 21st century, modernization, governance

JEL Codes: J10, O10, P10, P20

1. Introduction

The 21st century is facing new challenges. Some of them were known widely, some of them are new, some of them are hidden but essential and the row could be continued for many hours.

The answers are also very different, driven by politics, science, and economy and even by the many religions.

I tried to highlight the core problems of a European point of view and sometimes to show the Hungarian relevance and legitimate third ways in the not always integrated a united European Union.

The economic, security, environmental, minorities related, demographic trends; health related, food or migration challenges related problems are to be understood by a difficult comparison, where the modernity, European identity, common standards and issues, federalism, community of strong nations, competition, development and problem solving abilities are core ingredients.

2. Methods

The paper and the complexity of the studied fields have justified a synthesizing work of secondary collected and selected statistical and empirical data.

As the aim of this paper was an overall evaluation of the actual global questions, the analyses will leave many dilemmas unanswered.

3. Europe in the 21st Century

Nowadays one of the central questions of the global growth is the modernity. The modernity is seen by many aspects as progressivity, technical development, social movements, economic and political development.

3.1. Pogressivity

There is no clear definition what does the phenomenon progressivity mean. The 18th century opened the way for enlightenment. Immanuel Kant wrote in *What is Enlightenment?* : “Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. Sapere Aude! (dare to know)"Have courage to use your own understanding!" – that is the motto of enlightenment.” (Kant 1784,2019)

The possibility of the human development opened the way to the new ideas for the economy also. The 18th and 19th century have brought such an economic development which was never seen before (1.Figure). Madison’s project (Madison 2007) has shown that due to the industrial evolution the GDP pro capita achieved big progress.

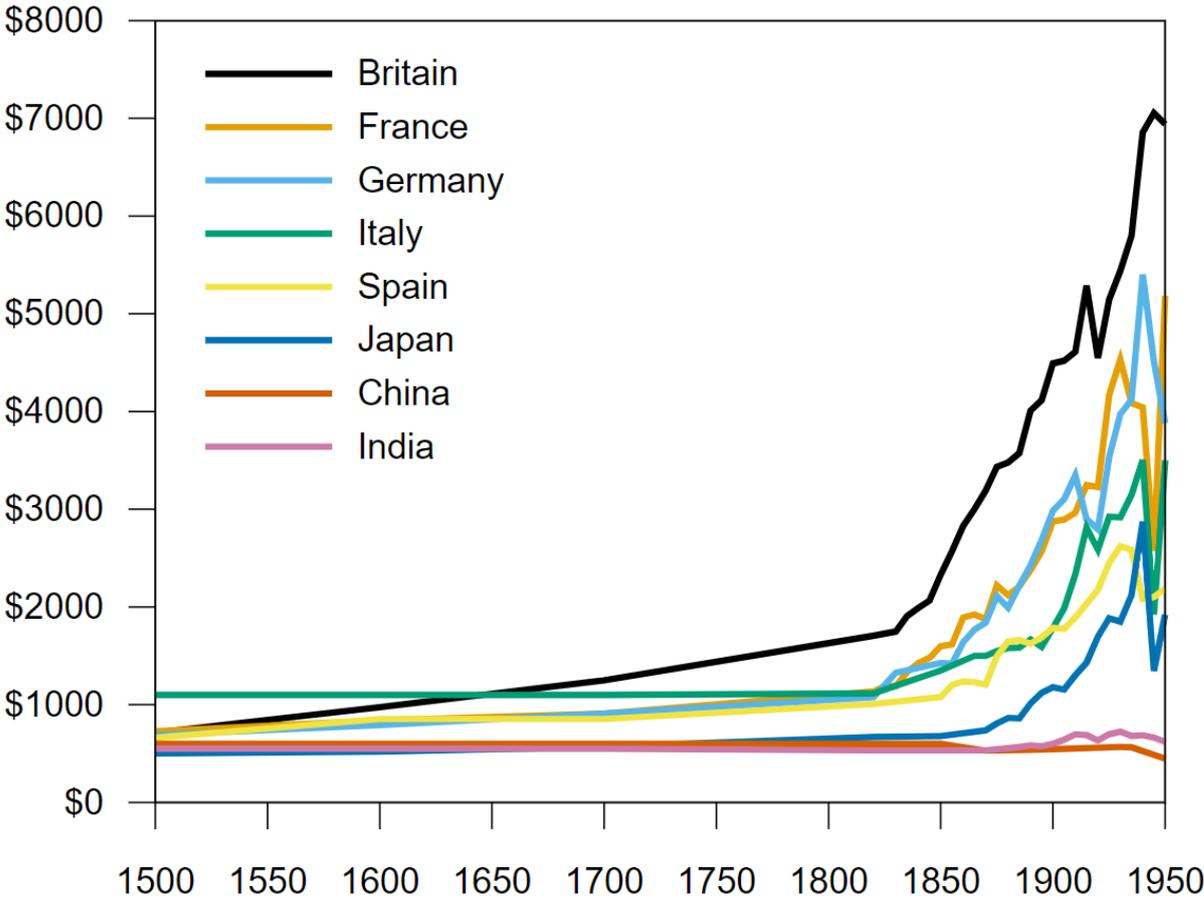


Figure 1: Economic Growth 1500-1950
 Source: Maddison_GDP_per_capita_1500-1950

3.2. Borderless Europe

Sir Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's idea in the 20th century brought new wave to the Pan-European theory. The borderless trade could lead to economic independence so it would prevent the next war. This idea was to unite Europe under Christianity to resist the communism and the Russian danger. As we know the 2nd world war and the soviet expansion was not stoppable.

Sir Winston Churchill's Zurich Speech projected a European Family, which is needed to preserve the peace and economic development: "The structure of the United States of Europe will be such as to make the material strength of a single State less important. Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by a contribution to the common cause. The ancient States and principalities of Germany, freely joined for mutual convenience in a federal system, might take their individual places among the United States of Europe." (Churchill, 1946)

Willy Brand's Neue Ostpolitik (New East Politics) is the result of the approaching blocks. "The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is engaged in standard setting in fields including military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns. In addition, the OSCE undertakes a variety of preventive diplomacy initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States."

The transition of the former communist countries at the end of the 20th century led to their reintegration to global democratic institutions, free trade blocks and capitalist economy. With the enlargement of the European Union the EU became the largest economic association and so its identity is also under investigation. The origins of the Roman-Greek culture values and the Christian-Jewish roots are common. On the other hand the twenty four languages with the many dialects and minority languages are differential factors.

The old phrase "Si fueris Romae, Romano vivito more!" means When in Rome do as the Romans do. It should be the main governing principle to integration. It works until the incomings are in minority and they assimilate after the second generation.

3.3. Common Standards in Europe

The political and economic systems in Europe are not necessarily the same. The previously colonist states are nowadays investing trading and developing countries. In many cases the common policies of the EU lead to a convergence but only in a limited range.

The European countries are different in the followings:

- Election systems
- Political systems
- country budget and tax systems
- international affairs
- defence policies
- school and research policies
- religious questions

The common economic competitiveness is the resultant of the member countries' competitiveness. As the main competitors are far away bigger than the member states separated, the idea of common affairs is necessarily in the global competition.

The changes and the differences make the understanding among the countries not easy. The challenges Europe and its countries are facing are obvious in many of the above mentioned questions.

In 3.1. the common Christian roots were already mentioned. The demographic changes and the immigration of refugees and migrants of different cultural and religious background have caused a considerable change in the western societies of Europe. (see Figure 2.)

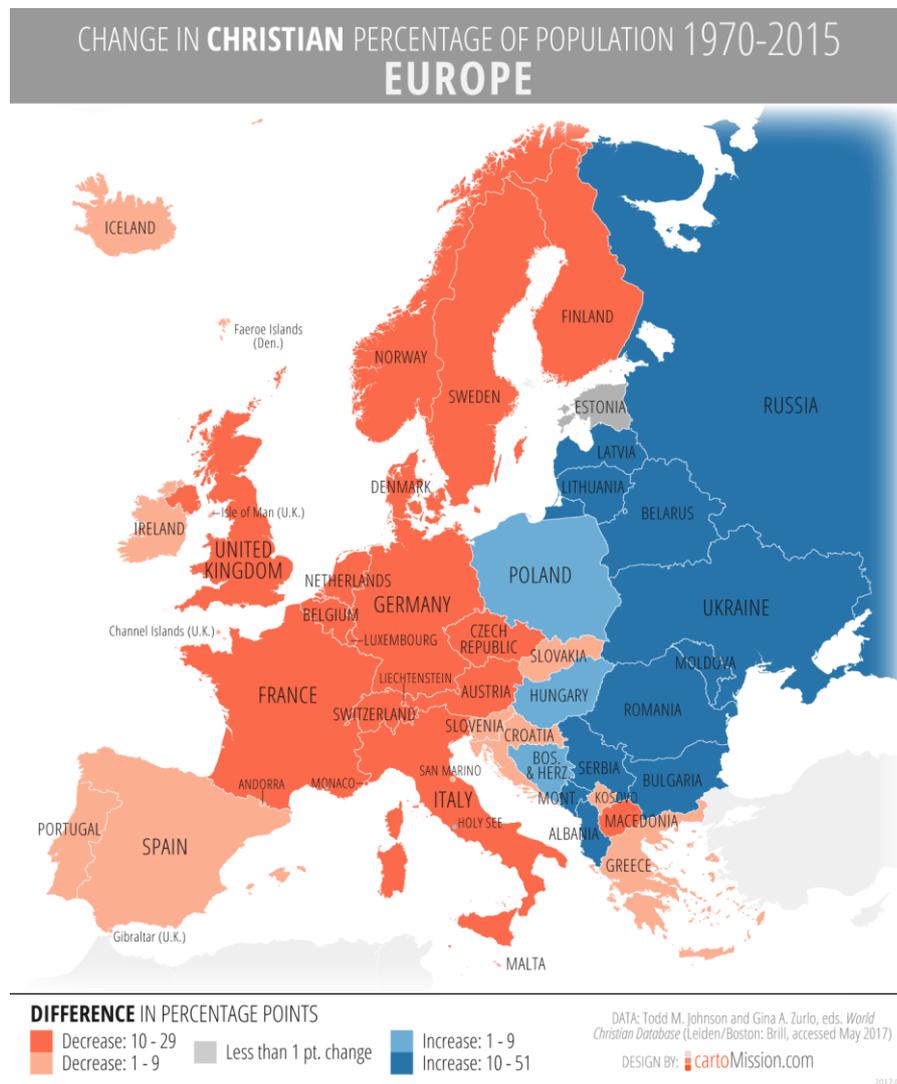


Figure 2: Change in Christian Percentage of Population 1970-2015 Europe
Source: Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007)

3.3. Common Policies

If the member states agree upon common interest, it should lead to a bigger distribution. Bigger distribution could only happen if the European budget would be based on bigger net payments. The GNI and value added tax based common budget is limited by arguably small 1 percentage. The Multiannual Financial Framework is originally on development and cohesion resources for the poorer countries (annual payment appropriations are not allowed to exceed 1.20% of the EU's gross national income (GNI)). For the common border defense, common military, real cohesion, common agriculture and the infrastructural, industrial and research policies is this budget not enough. The *federalist movements* would need a broad agreement on the above mentioned different interests.

The Union of strong nations is the opposite of federal Europe, which allows the countries to cooperate in many fields, but leaving a wide range of privileges at the states.

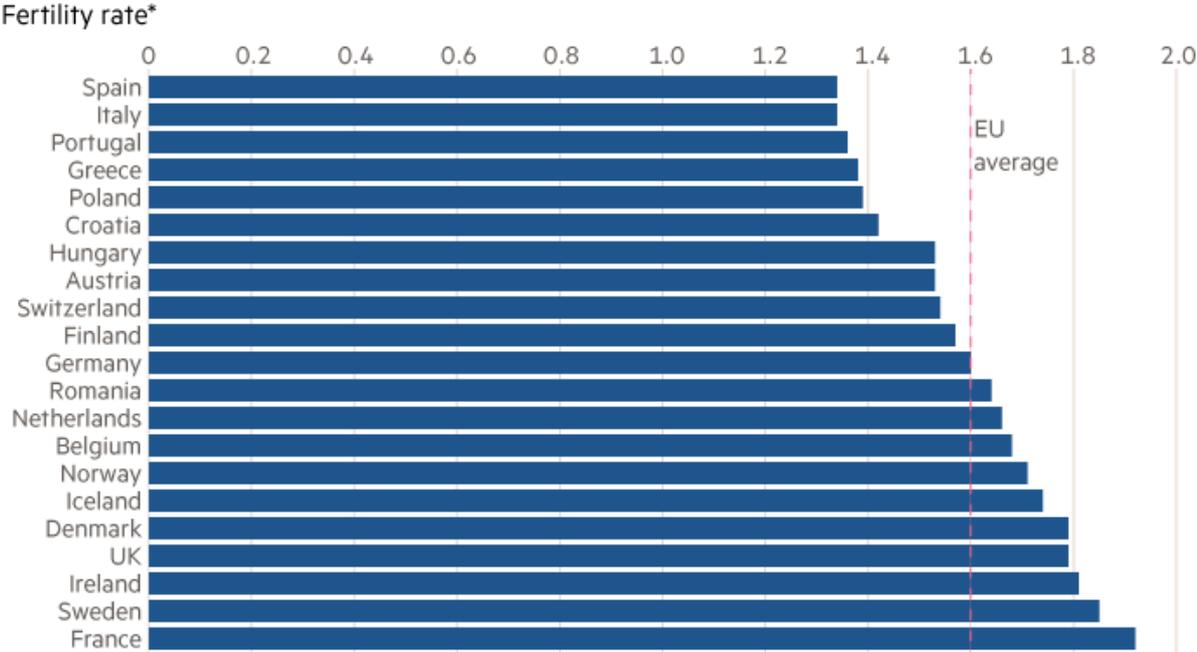
Federal structures of the European Union help clarify the challenges of democracy, freedom and legitimacy that face an unfinished political union. Theories about federalism and the truth of real federal states cannot be easily separated in an analysis of the EU’s multilevel political order, but so far, many decision makers and scientists have shown attention only in the normal operation of federal systems: disregarding the dilemma of the union’s legitimate institution has caused in an existential disaster for the EU which has not developed to a deep integration over recent years. Federalism is a mixture of political theory and political science, of federal philosophic ideas and their suggestions in real working institutions, in order to achieve the task of accepting the federal features of the EU governance structure. (Kovacevic, 2017)

4. Actual Challenges

What is the biggest challenge and problem in the 21st century in Europe? Is it the demography? Is it the migration? The Integration problems? The maintaining of social Europe? The climate change? Other challenges?

Demography

Aging Europe’s effect is much more complex than thought, the labor market, pension systems and supply chains will have problems on the small number of planned and born children. 2,1 children are needed for the simple reproduction which is far away in all European countries. (Kamarás 2006) The EU average 1,6 is leading to smaller populations and aging societies. (Figure 3.)



*Number of children a woman is expected to have over a lifetime

Source: Eurostat

Figure 3: Fertility Rates in Europe
Source: Ecostat

To the demographic problems the migration could be a logical answer. But only statistically are the numbers ready to cover some gaps, if we analyze the immigration of refugees and migrants, then it shows other problems. (Figure 4.)

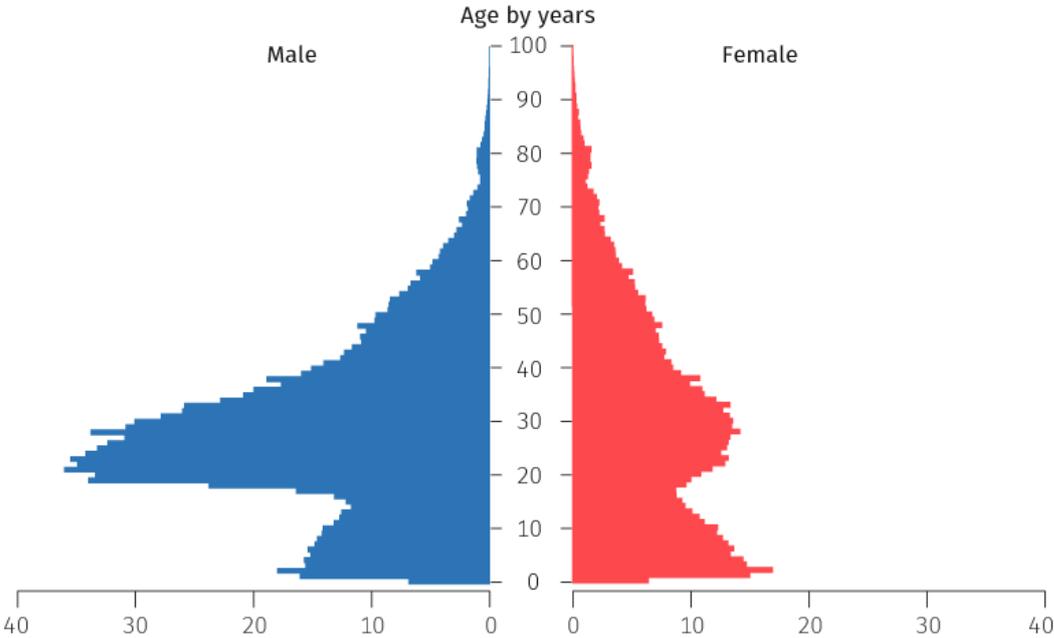


Figure 4: Age structure of people seeking protection in 2018
 Source: Central Register of Foreigners, 2019

5. Summary, Europe’s opportunities

In the 21st century the rapid changes in technology, R&D&I, Smart branches, capabilities for climate changes, migration, wars and health issues make Europe of the most competitive regions of the world. A deeper integration is not possible because of national interests and the inadequate financial contribution to a common budget. Due to MacDougall-report the greater integration in political and monetary issues would need 5-7 percentage, the United States redistributes and uses 25 percentage of contribution of the single states to the federal budget.

The bigger problem is to reach a deeper European cooperation is the resistance of the countries. There is no common European identity, but there are common European values and goals. Europe belongs to the prosperous half of the World, so face the global challenges will be easier and effective with this scale of contribution to the common budget.

The Brexit leaves a deep wound on the reputation of the European Union, a big net payer is out of the family, so the common goals are going to be financed of a smaller common budget.

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Central Register of Foreigners

Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007)

Ecostat