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## Challenging the future: the democratic deficit of the EU from a federalist perspective

**Abstract:** Over the decades the European Union (EU) has evolved into a “quasi-state” of roughly 500 million citizens with 28 members. This process has also brought about the so-called ‘democratic deficit’ arguments arising from the (un)democratic characteristics of the EU institutions (institutional dimension) and lack of a European demos (socio-psychological dimension). Political systems need peoples’ recognition, acceptance and understanding of the system and the rulers in order to preserve their existence. Hence, as a political system, as long as the EU does not make necessary reforms in terms of democracy, democratic deficit will be a challenge to the future of the EU. In this context the paper will aim to present answers to both institutional and socio-psychological dimensions of democratic deficit from a federalist perspective.

**Keywords:** democracy, democratic deficit, federalism, European demos, constitutional patriotism.

**JEL code:** E60.

### Introduction

The EU faces a dilemma at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it represents both the greatest hope and the greatest danger to democracy in Europe. Whilst the EU is regarded as both the means and the guarantee of democratic stability and economic prosperity for Central and Eastern Europe the EU itself does not fully meet the prerequisites for democracy [Katz 2001, p. 54]. Democracy was not acknowledged as an issue at the beginning of European integration. It was believed that the participation and support of the peoples for the in-

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tegration would have been ensured with the positive results of the integration in economic, political and social life. In addition it was widely accepted that the aggregation of the democratic member states would have automatically democratized the European Communities and the institutions. Hence for many years the European Communities relied on the process of indirect legitimation whereby the citizens of respective member states elected their representatives in national parliaments which in turn elected their own representative at the European level [Cordina 2003, pp. 55–56]. However since the Single European Act (SEA) and the Maastricht Treaty the forced transfer of political decisions and allocations from the national to the European level has weakened the indirect democratic influence and control at the national level without the compensating establishment of equally strong democratic institutions and processes at the European level [Horeth 1999, p. 250]. The increasing effect of the EU on the daily lives of the citizens has led to a questioning of the democratic character of the integration.

Over the decades the EU has expanded not only its borders with the accession of the new member states but also its powers and competences with the treaty changes. The EU may not be a federal state yet but it is also not an ordinary international organization. The EU has developed into a new type of political system by evolving from a horizontal system of interstate co-operation into a vertical and multi-layered policy-making polity [Horeth 1999, p. 249]. The great majority of the EU laws are directly binding on EU citizens. However it is a question whether the citizens' preferences are reflected in the EU laws. The question originates from the institutional and structural characteristics of the EU which do not meet the conditions of the principles of democracy. Political systems need peoples' recognition, acceptance and understanding of the system and the rulers in order to preserve their existence. Yet many EU citizens are reluctant and sceptical of the EU's policies. This distrust is showed not only in the low turnout in the elections to the European Parliament (EP) but also in the loudly voiced, sometimes violent, opposition of anti-globalisation groups [Eriksen 2001, p. 2]. This disconnection between the EU and EU citizens has been seen in the referendums on the treaties as well as in the Euro crisis. Although the treaty changes have given a boost to the democratization of the EU they have fallen short of meeting the needs. Therefore if the EU is required to be a viable project for a long time necessary reforms in terms of democracy should be made; otherwise, the democratic deficit will be a challenge to the future of the EU.

The academic literature provides several perspectives for understanding and solving the democratic deficit of the EU. The aim of this paper is to ar-

gue that amongst others the federalist model would give optimal answers to overcome the democratic deficit. In developing this argument the article is divided into four sections. The first section tries to delineate what we understand by democracy and democratic deficit. The second section briefly explains the most common views on the democratic deficit of the EU. This study subscribes to the view that the EU suffers from a democratic deficit. The third section points out the close relationship between federalism and democracy and the last section concludes the paper with the federalist solutions to both dimensions of the democratic deficit.

## **1. What are democracy and democratic deficit?**

The term democracy originally comes from the Greek word *demokratia*, rule of the people, which derives from *demos* meaning the people and *kratos* meaning rule [Catt 1999, p. 4]. Democracy has been continually evolving in its meaning and form since the first practices were found in ancient Athens where democracy was directly carried out by all the people. When large populations became a reality ‘*demos*’ entitled representatives to exercise ‘*kratos*’ and thus, representative democracy took the place of the Athenian direct democracy.

Although there is a ‘perennial’ dispute about the definition of modern democracy in the literature many theorists agree to the main components of democracy, though indicating them differently [Follesdal & Hix 2006, p. 547]. For Arblaster [1987, p. 105], democracy is ‘a method of organizing public life which allows the concerns and interests of citizens to be articulated within government. Democracy’s defining properties are its institutional controls, the peaceful resolution of conflicts in society, meaningful legislative representation, as well as civic inclusion and political participation.’ According to Karl and Schmitter [1991, p. 76], democracy is ‘a regime or a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives’. Przeworski [1991, p. 10] defines democracy as ‘a system where parties lose elections. There are parties: divisions of interest, values and opinions. There is competition organized by rules. And there are periodic winners and losers.’ Dahl [1971, pp. 2–3] specifies the requirements for democracy as: ‘not only free, fair and competitive elections, but also the freedoms that make them truly meaningful (such as freedom of organization and freedom of expression), alternative sources of information and institutions

to ensure that government policies depend on the votes and preferences of citizens.' What is important to understand about democracy is that democracy requires its 'demos' which makes decisions binding on all the people [Lord 2008, p. 316]. Yet this is not just simply the people who have shared values and identities; demos represent the idea of a political community.

By extending the definitions, we can point out some essential requirements for a political system to be considered as democratic: (1) a demos, (2) institutionally established procedures that regulate, (3) equal citizen participation in an electoral mechanism where citizens' preferences determine the outcomes, (4) an effective legislative body filled directly or indirectly by free, fair and competitive elections, (5) an executive body (government) authorized by demos, (6) decisions corresponding to the interests of demos and (7) an accountable executive body responsible to demos [Alvarez et al. 1996, p. 5; Follesdal & Hix, 2006; Lord 1998, p. 15; 2008]. In this context the democratic deficit arguments surrounding the EU arise from the fact that the EU in some way fails to fulfill these conditions.

The phrase democratic deficit made its first appearance in the 1970s from David Marquand, a British political scientist, in order to underline the democratic weakness of the institutions of the European Communities. He argued that a democratic deficit occurred as a result of the indirect composition of the Assembly, the forerunner of the EP, and he favored a directly elected parliament as a solution to the deficit [Marquand 1979, p. 64]. Democratic deficit basically refers to a lack or inadequacy in the fulfilment of the principles of democracy. Thus democratic deficit, as Habermas put it, 'arises whenever the set of those involved in making democratic decisions fails to coincide with the set of those affected by them' [Habermas 2000, p. 52].

## **2. The democratic deficit of the EU**

The academic literature provides us with several views on the issue of the democratic deficit of the EU. I categorize them into three groups. The first group claims that there is no democratic deficit, yet the EU suffers from a credibility crisis. The member states gave regulatory policy competences to the EU and therefore the EU is only a regulatory agency as a fourth branch of government much like domestic regulatory agencies such as telecom agencies, central banks or even courts [Majone 1998]. To solve the credibility crisis the EU needs procedural changes to have a more transparent decision-making

process, greater professionalism and technical expertise, ex post review by courts and ombudsmen, rules protecting the rights of minority interests and better scrutiny by private actors, the media and parliamentarians at both the EU and national level [Follesdal & Hix 2006, p. 538].

The arguments in the second group defend the hypothesis that the EU is already as democratic as it needs to be. This group claims that the democratic characteristics of the EU should not be compared in the light of requirements for an ideal parliamentary democracy which no modern state can meet. If the EU is judged by existing advanced industrial democracies the EU is democratic enough since constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control through national governments and the increasing power of the EP are sufficient to ensure that the EU policy-making clean, transparent, effective, open and responsive to the needs of European citizens [Moravcsik 2002].

The last group claims that there is a democratic deficit from which the EU suffers. The majority of the academic literature on democratic deficit falls within the arguments of this group. Advocates of this group point out that the democratic deficit of the EU stems from the decisions in the EU which are insufficiently representative of, or accountable to, the nations and the citizens of Europe [Lord 2001, p. 165]. Although there is a wide consensus on the fact that the EU is not democratic the literature lacks an agreement on how the EU might become democratic [Chrysochoou 2009, p. 379]. This is mainly the result of the definitions and views which vary with the nationality, intellectual positions and preferred solutions of the scholars [Follesdal & Hix 2006, p. 534]. In this context we can mention that the current democratic deficit understandings split into two major dimensions: the first one is institutional (the lack of proper parliamentary control over EU decision-making) and the second one is socio-psychological (the absence of a transnational European demos) [Chrysochoou, Stavridis & Tsinisizelis 1998, p. 110].

### ***2.1. The institutional dimension of the democratic deficit***

The main view of this dimension is that the EP, the only directly elected institution of the EU, has not been matched by the same role as national parliaments in legislation and democratic accountability [Chrysochoou 2009, p. 380]. Despite the growing powers of the EP its role in legislation is still restricted and its powers are relatively weak compared to the Council and the Commission. Unlike in a classical parliamentary system the EP does not make laws in the same way as national parliaments and does not initiate the legislative process as it is practiced by parliaments and executives in the member

states. In addition the EP does not enjoy the exclusive power to appoint or dismiss the Commission which holds the most substantial executive functions whilst the elected members of the parliaments in the member states dismiss the government. Although the President and the College of Commissioners now require the formal approval of the EP, the Commissioners are still decided by national governments [Decker 2002, pp. 260–261]. Another issue concerning the EP is that there are no real ‘European elections’. European Parliament elections are not about Europe but instead are mid-term national contests. This absence of a European element in elections means that EU citizens’ preferences on issues on the EU policy-making have a limited influence on the policy outcomes [Follesdal & Hix 2006, pp. 535–536]. This leads to another problem that citizens choose to be distant from the EU as the system is too complicated for them to understand.

Another criticism concerning the EU’s institutional arrangement is that the Commission, as an executive body, is not accountable to the citizens and it possess too much power [Chrysochoou 2009, pp. 380–381]. The Commission holds the exclusive right to initiate legislation in the EU. This very control of the legislative agenda allows the Commission to set priorities for the EU and control their implementation independent from the member states. Although it has functions comparable to national governments, as stated above, its composition is not a result of a direct election, thus it is not directly accountable to the EP, in other words, to the peoples of the EU [Horeth 1999, p. 254]. This makes the Commission the only ‘prerogative’ group of non-elected persons in the world which has the exclusive right to propose laws [Bonde 2011, p. 149]. Some scholars argue that the European Central Bank and the Court of Justice of the European Union also enjoy similar powers without being accountable to the people. They are criticized as they are staffed by non-elected officials who expand their competencies without public scrutiny [Chrysochoou 2009, p. 381; Zweifel 2002, pp. 818–819].

The Council is also the subject of criticisms as it is the most secretive and nontransparent body among the EU institutions. With the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty the Council has to meet in public when it formally adopts a draft legislative act under the ordinary legislative procedure. However the real debates and negotiations on the majority of laws still take place in the working groups of the Council and in the EU’s ‘real secret government’, COREPER, the Committee of Permanent Representatives. Members of national parliaments and the EP cannot obtain information from those working groups during the negotiations [Bonde 2011, pp. 150–151]. This secrecy raises the problem of trust by the people of the EU.

Lastly the EU institutional framework has weak competencies to carry out macroeconomic stabilization and redistribution. Although the efficiency of EU policy-making is quite extensive in various policy areas, the capacity to solve issues of the EU is insufficient as it does not have the essential competencies to perform policy tasks such as macroeconomic stabilization and redistribution. In addition the EU prevents the member states from maintaining such functions. This feature of the EU results in shortcomings in addressing major macroeconomic challenges and it undermines the EU's output legitimacy [Börzel & Hosli 2003].

## ***2.2. The socio-psychological dimension of the democratic deficit***

The democratic deficit is not only a result of the inadequacies of the EU institutions and decision-making in terms of the preconditions of democracy. It is only one side of the coin. As democracy is based on demos and demos' consent it is necessary to examine the social preconditions of democracy as well. A political system can have all the characteristics of a perfect democracy yet may still lack legitimacy without a demos [Decker 2002, p. 263]. Hence the socio-psychological dimension focuses on the absence of a European demos by shifting the question from 'who governs and how?' to 'who is governed?' [Chrysochoou 2009, p. 382].

The debates about the absence of a European demos, known also as the no-demos thesis, coincided with the Maastricht Decision of the German Federal Constitutional Court. In its verdict the Court concluded that democracy in Europe is structured in such a way that each state has a population which is organized in their respective states. Therefore as the EU does not have a population it does not have the social structures to build a democratic polity [Jolly 2007, pp. 73–74]. Political systems need citizens who are connected to each other by common shared identity to ensure collective determination, in other words, a demos [Jolly 2005, p. 12]. In a political system without a demos, the decision-makers are not equal to those who have to comply with the decisions and this contributes to the lack of legitimacy which may eventually cause the downfall of the system [Jolly 2007, p. 71]. Moreover a sense of a shared identity is important to the formation of a democratic political system as members of the system have to accept the decisions of some kind of a majority which are binding on them [Lord 1998, p. 107]. Thus, a demos is a necessity for a political system to be democratically legitimate. In this sense the EU needs a demos whose members recognize their collective existence, share an active

interest in the governance and direct their democratic claims to and via the central institutions. That is why this demos should be a transnational demos rather than a classical nation-state demos, which will turn ‘many people into a demos without ceasing to be many’ [Chrysochoou 2009, p. 382].

### **3. Federalism and democracy**

Before interpreting the relationship between federalism and democracy it might be useful to describe briefly what federalism refers to. The word federalism derives from the Latin root *foedus* which means agreement, bargain, covenant, compact or contract. *Foedus* also means *fides* which is faith or trust. The basic implication of these terms today is that a federal pact or agreement is a voluntary union based upon mutual recognition and respect [Burgess 2000, p. 13]. Federalism can be construed as a political ideology or political philosophy which has been related to the processes of state building and integration as a particular way of bringing together previously separate, autonomous, or independent territorial units to constitute a new form of union based upon principles. Federalism is best summarized in ‘the unity in diversity’ dictum which refers to a union of states and peoples. It is a constitution-based union whose principal purpose is to recognize, preserve and formally accommodate distinct interests, identities which are grouped around historical, cultural, social, economic, ideological, intellectual and philosophical factors [Burgess 2009, pp. 26–29].

The relationship between democracy and federalism has a long history and goes back to the writings of Rousseau and Kant where both the philosophers followed a federalist path to implement democracy on a larger scale than states [Chrysochoou 1998, p. 3]. To begin with we find a simultaneous focus upon minority identities, cultures and rights and the expression of majority rule within contemporary polities at the heart of federalism and democracy [Burgess & Gagnon 2010, p. 18]. Federalism and democracy constantly seek to accommodate the varying interests of differences within a viable political framework which is based on the explicit consent of the demos, the peaceful solutions of societal disputes and the rule of law [Chrysochoou 1998, p. 1]. Federalism lets the unit not only preserve their features but also have their own policy-making whilst having a say in the policy-making of the central government [Ghobadi & Valadbigi 2011, p. 41]. Accordingly federalism enhances democracy and governmental responsiveness as multiple levels of

government maximize the opportunity for citizens' preferences, establish alternative areas for citizen participation and provide for governments which are smaller and closer to the people [Watts 2010, p. 328]. Therefore people acquire more participation in their political fate [Ghobadi & Valadbigi, 2011, p. 41]. In addition federalism appears to be the most viable framework for democratization across large territories and human heterogeneity under the conditions of freedom and respect, although federalism itself does not guarantee democracy. Federalism, as stated above, combines unity and diversity and bases both unity and diversity on demos' consent, "thereby allowing people to have their cake and eat it too, namely, large-scale democratic governance for the things where large-scale governance is necessary and small-scale democratic self-governance for the things that make life most worth living" [Kincaid 2010, p. 322]. Taking into account all of these factors, it can be said that there is a strong relationship between democracy and federalism. In fact it is possible to consider federalism as a particular type of democracy: 'a pluralist democracy based on a constitutional system of delegated, reserved and/or shared powers between relatively autonomous, yet interrelated, structures of government, whose multiple interactions aim to serve the sovereign will of the federal demos' [Chrysochoou 1998, p. 18].

## **4. Federalist answers to the democratic deficit**

There are several routes and models suggested in recent debates on the democratization of the EU [Chrysochoou 2009; Jolly 2007]. Most of them either focus on only one dimension of the issue or propose insufficient solutions. On the other hand federalism with its close relationship to democracy provides a 'demos focus' solution for the participation of the units and citizens to the system. Thus federalism has often been said to be the best model for creating a democratic EU as legitimacy could be provided at the EU level whilst maintaining legitimacy at the national level at the same time [Jolly 2007, p. 97].

### ***4.1. Federalist solutions to the institutional dimension of the democratic deficit***

Federalists argue that changes need to be made for the EU to meet the conditions for democratic rule associated with the non-interference of the legisla-

tive institutions which are the EP, the Commission and the Council [Bowman 2006, p. 196]. They defend the idea that the structure of the institutions should be changed within the framework of a constitution which will also be the basis of creating a European demos.

The introduction of a European constitution<sup>1</sup> will improve the accountability, transparency and the effectiveness of the EU policy-making process, thereby strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the EU. A European constitution will clarify the division of power and competences amongst the EU institutions and the member states which will allow the EU to have a clearer voice and a greater influence [Jung & Kim 2010, p. 60]. In addition a European constitution will improve the capacity of the member states to act collectively without prejudicing the course and content of policies [Habermas 2001, p. 12]. Besides the constitutional guarantees for representation and participation of the member states the constitution will secure certain interests of every group including those of minorities [Follesdal 1998, p. 43].

The federalist view maintains that as legitimacy rests first and foremost upon European citizens the EP is the main legitimizing source of the EU system. Therefore the democratic deficit of the EU is mainly caused by the undervalued role of the EP, the democratic element of representation [Diedrichs & Wessel 1997, p. 3]. Although the power and competencies of the EP have been increased since the first direct elections in 1979 the EP is still much weaker than national parliaments. Yet there is an obvious need for a stronger democratic representation and control and accountability of the system. That is why, as the first step of the new institutional framework, a real bicameral system should be introduced to represent the peoples and the member states. The Council should develop into a second chamber of the EP and the EP should be an equal with the Council in the EU legislative process [ordinary legislative procedure and qualified majority voting in the Council should be default procedures]. The Commission should function as a real executive body and hand over its legislative powers to the EP and the Council [Börzel & Hosli 2003, p. 192]. The new setup will not only guarantee the equal representation of the citizens and the member states but also strengthen the direct and indirect legitimacy of the EU. In addition the system will be more organized and more easily to be understood by the citizens as in Germany which is a good example.

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<sup>1</sup> This constitution should be differentiated from the unratified “Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe” also known as “the European Constitution” since the European Constitution had merely the name of constitution and its nature was not very different from an international treaty.

The federalist view prefers for two options to guarantee the accountability of the Commission to the citizens. One way is that the College of Commissioners and the Commission President would be appointed and kept in office by the majority of the EP. The second way is that the Commission President would directly elected by the citizens in a separate election. Both options will contribute to the creation of European-wide parties and competitions. The EP members and parties will have to renounce their national perspectives and concentrate on European issues, cross-border candidates and election campaigns. Consequently there will be increased pressure to mobilize the electorate which will enhance solidarity in Europe and, of course, have a positive effect on elections to the EP [Börzel & Hosli 2003, p. 192; Decker 2002, pp. 265–267; Lord 2008, p. 319].

The structure and functioning of the Council have not experienced a big change as a result the treaties. However widening and deepening processes have increased the agenda of the Council while having decreased its effectiveness. Federalists sharply criticize the Council's secrecy and its privileged position with regard to legislation compared to the EP. The federalist view argues that the Council should be the second chamber of the EP and qualified majority voting in the Council should be the default procedure. The working groups of the Council where the real debates on laws take place should be abolished. To improve the legitimacy of the Council its activities and meetings should be more transparent and open to the citizens. This not only means that the Council should legislate in public but also that its own proceedings and meetings should be recorded and open to the citizens via the media [Lord 2008, p. 319]. Without full transparency of amendment procedures, agenda-control rules and even the recording of votes, it is very difficult for academics, the media and the public to follow what goes on inside. People need to see who proposed what, what coalitions formed, which amendments failed and who was on the winning and losing side [Follesdal & Hix 2006, pp. 553–554]. Openness should not be limited to the Council and it should be a general principle for all meetings on legislation in the EU [Bonde 2011, p. 161].

The limited taxation and spending capacity of the EU prevent it making effective policies which may increase the prosperity of the citizens. To tackle the so-called output legitimacy the EU needs to hold strong macroeconomic stabilization and redistribution powers. A spending power like in Germany, for example, corresponding to a share of about 20 percent of the overall GDP will increase the EU's redistributive capacity and certainly strengthen the output legitimacy and effectiveness of European governance [Börzel & Hosli 2003, pp. 192–193].

## ***4.2. Federalist answers to the socio-psychological dimension***

The concept of demos, based on national identity, has taken its form from the specific historical conditions which arose through the state formation process of the 19th century. Hence they are not objective, inconsistent and capable of change. In the globalizing world nation-states have lost their significance and a demos refers to the features which go beyond nation-states. Therefore, it would be wrong to search for a European demos based on national or ethno-cultural terms [Inanc & Ozler 2007, p. 130]. Instead the EU needs a transnational demos based on democratic values. Federalists claim that a European demos could be created on the basis of EU citizenship under a common constitution.

EU citizenship was first introduced by the Maastricht Treaty and developed by the Treaty of Amsterdam. It provides the citizens of the member states with transnational political rights without replacing national citizenships. EU citizenship mobilizes further integration by accelerating civic participation in the EU policies and it strengthens the sense of belonging to a European polity. The aim here is that the citizens feel that they are a member of a European demos. Therefore EU citizenship reflects the transformation process of the plurality of demoi to a pluralistic demos [Inanc & Ozler 2007, pp. 130–131]. However the present situation of EU citizenship is far from creating of a European demos. At this point the following question comes to mind: what would the elements of EU citizenship embody which will link the citizens to each other and to the EU? Federalists believe that ‘constitutional patriotism’ seems to provide the most suitable answer in many ways. Constitutional patriotism is a patriotism of constitutional principles and the way they have been institutionalized in political institutions and rights. It is a patriotism of the demos rather than the ethnos and through it one can create a common ‘we’ whilst preserving the differences [Thomassen 2010, p. 144]. It relies on the notion that solidarity could be found beyond cultural, regional and ethnic differences through a constitutional arrangement which is based on democratic principles and values. If people share and practice these constitutional principles, this will eventually bring trust amongst people to maintain the EU as a political community [Jung & Kim 2010, p. 58]. Constitutional patriotism emphasizes that democratic citizenship should be rooted in the principles of legal, moral and political concepts rather than the national identity of the people. In addition constitutional patriotism allows competition and differences and provides a focal point for a plurality of identities which can challenge, cooperate and enrich one another. Thus it does not imply a unique political culture but

a shared political culture made up of distinct national traditions. Lastly constitutional patriotism is a universally open public identity and does not need to identify an 'other' to stabilize its existence [Kumm 2005; Lacroix 2002].

Constitutional patriotism asserts that a political democracy does not need any identification with historical or cultural identities. It should rather strengthen the coexistence and the cooperation of these diverse identities. The exponents of constitutional patriotism acknowledge that although nations have played a substantial role in modern history and in fostering democratic values, sharing particular ethnic, historical or cultural origins no longer constitute a base for modern citizenships [Lacroix 2002, p. 946]. Examples of multicultural societies like Switzerland and the United States demonstrate that a political culture can be based on the citizens without sharing the same language or the same ethnic and cultural origins [Habermas 1994, p. 27]. Europe comprises of diversity and multiculturalism. Therefore a European demos cannot take a national shape based on common ethnic, historical or cultural origins in the contemporary era. A European demos rather should refer to a 'post-national' identity established on principles of universality and autonomy which underpin the concept of democracy and rule of law [Lacroix 2002, p. 946]. Consequently constitutional patriotism provides a base for the creation of a European demos through EU citizenship within a federalist framework.

## Conclusions

The EU faces a democratic deficit on its way to political integration. The problem stems from the fact that the EU institutions were not structured within the terms of democracy in the early years of integration and that we cannot talk about a European demos. Although this deficiency was not seen as a significant issue at first now it is one of the biggest challenges the EU has to deal with for its future. Given the current circumstances it is not an easy task to overcome the democratic deficit. In addition, the economic crisis has affected the democratic deficit of the EU in a negative way. The majority of the measures to deal with the economic crisis have taken by the European Council and the member states and thus this approach has extended the democratic deficit by leaving out the EP in the decision-making process.

It has been tried to increase the democratic notion of the EU through the treaties. However those reforms fell short of dealing with the real problems. Therefore thanks to the sui generis feature of the EU, various approaches have

been put forward to overcome the democratic deficit of the EU. The federalist approach focusing on the representation of the peoples and member states and guaranteeing the rights of citizens including those of the minority rights seems to be the most suitable model on the table. The federalists argue that the institutional structure of the EU should be reconstructed within the framework of a federal constitution. This constitution will also trigger the creation of a European demos based on legal, moral and political principles by enhancing EU citizenship. Although it is possible to claim that the federalist solutions would increase the level of democracy in the EU these solutions face substantial problems if they were to be implemented. To overcome the democratic deficit, there is a need for a consensus of all the member states about the problem. In the case of the federalist solutions this consensus would take a long while since the member states are not in favour of radical changes in the system. In addition several member states led by the United Kingdom, Denmark and Sweden strongly oppose the idea that the EU should have more federalist features. Hence it is not likely that the federalist solutions will be realized in the near future.

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