

Rikard Bengtsson &  
Malena Rosén Sundström (Eds.)



**THE EU AND  
THE EMERGING  
GLOBAL ORDER**

Essays in honour  
of Ole Elgström

# The EU and the emerging global order

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RIKARD BENGTTSSON AND  
MALENA ROSÉN SUNDSTRÖM (EDS.)



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

LUND POLITICAL STUDIES 194

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Lund Political Studies 194

ISBN 978-91-7753-931-5 (print)

978-91-7753-932-2 (pdf)

ISSN 0460-0037

Cover picture: Mikael Sundström

Typesetting: Gunilla Albertén, Media-Tryck

Printed in Sweden by Media-Tryck, Lund University, Lund 2018



Nordic Swan Ecolabel 3041 0903

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## 8 The EU and the crisis of liberal order: at home and abroad<sup>1</sup>

*Sonia Lucarelli*

In recent years there has been a flourishing debate on the crisis of the Liberal World Order.<sup>2</sup> Most of the attention has been devoted to the rise of non-liberal actors who could challenge the foundations of the liberal world order, be they states (Russia and China in the first place) or non-state actors (Daesh/ISIS). Since the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency, however, also the US has gradually become a challenger to the world order it had contributed to shape since World War II. At the moment, if to some observers the liberal order continues to look rather resilient (Ikenberry 2014, 2015), to the eyes of many it is in serious trouble and there is a widely shared expectation that the future world will be “less *liberal*, and [...] less *American*” (Alcaro 2018: 1). To be true, the world is already – and will be even more – *less Western*, and in being so, it will also be *less European*.

Europe’s role in shaping the core norms of world order has been frequently overshadowed by the predominant (US dominated) IR reading of

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter benefitted from research conducted in the framework of the research project *Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice* (GLOBUS), funded by the EU for the years 2016-2020 under the Research and Innovation Action, Horizon 2020, Societal Challenges 6: Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies. For more information: <http://www.globus.uio.no/research>.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Acharya 2014, 2017; Alcaro ed. 2018; Caffarena 2017; Flockhart et al 2014; Flockhart 2016; Ikenberry 2011, 2014, 2015; Ischniger 2015; Jacques 2009; Kupchan 2012; Nye 2017; Stuenkel 2016; Telò 2017.

the liberal order as predominantly a result of American – more or less benevolent – leadership. Europe has, however, played a fundamental role in the expansion of the basic norms of the liberal international society. Not only the expansion of international society with its core norms started in Europe – for good (Bull and Watson 1984), or for worse (Suzuki 2009) – but during the Cold War Europe developed a system of regional integration in which all core principles of the liberal order were developed as nowhere else: continuity between domestic and foreign policy, liberal democracy, a *constitutionalization* of international politics – based on the assumption of the existence of a core set of universal norms (human rights *in primis*), multilateralism and embedded liberalism (welfare systems and free trade combined). Such a system, institutionalised in a dense set of institutions, transformed Western Europe into a laboratory of an enhanced liberal order.

It was this Europe which, although institutionally still immature to face the challenges ahead, took the burden to stabilize Central and Eastern Europe through the expansion of liberal norms (Sedelmeier and Schimmelfennig 2005; Schimmelfennig et al 2006). The expansion of institutions was the carrot to achieve the transition of Central and Eastern states to liberal democracy and free market, as well as their adherence to international law. Moreover, the so-called “structural foreign policy” of the EU (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014) has always embedded a liberal Kantian receipt for the construction of long-term peace: spread of democracy, development of (regional) forms of *foedus pacificum*, support/development of international law and human rights. The distinctiveness of such a foreign policy led scholars to talk of the EU as an “adjectivised power” (normative, civilian, soft ...) whose *sui generis* international role was to be found in the EU’s socially and historically constructed political identity (Elgström and Smith 2006; Lucarelli and Manners 2006; Sjursen 2006, 2012). The EU has been able to diffuse liberal democratic norms both for what it was (a successful model of regional integration) and for what it purposely did. The extent and the mechanisms of this diffusion have been object of debate, but there seem to be little doubt on the EU’s liberal credentials.

And today? Is the EU still a pillar of the liberal world order based on liberal democracy, free trade, embedded liberalism, universalism of norms

and multilateralism? And can it work to save what is left of the liberal order globally? The answer is “hardly so” and the rest of this chapter will explain why.

## EU’s weakened liberalism at home...

The European integration process, despite its accelerations and periods of stagnation, has always represented the incarnation of the liberal faith in progress, the trust in the possibility that the modern, rational human being could shape and transform the socio-political and material environment to create a better world for him/herself and offsprings. One of the most successful political versions of this liberal worldview has been the institutionalised cooperation among former enemies in Europe and the gradual, incremental, creation of common institutions following the logic and the practice of the *spillover* among areas of cooperation. Particularly since the EU acquired a more visible international stance, in the 1990s, its self-representation as an international actor was inspired by the same worldview. The texts of the Laeken declaration (2001) affirmed that “Europe needs to shoulder its responsibilities in the governance of globalisation [...to do] battle against all violence, all terror and all fanaticism, [... and against] the world’s heartrending injustices” (European Council 2001). The guiding principles, proclaimed the Lisbon Treaty, should be those “which have *inspired its own creation*, development and enlargement, and which it *seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights* and fundamental freedoms, respect for *human dignity*, the principles of *equality and solidarity*, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.” (Article III-292 of the constitution; Art 23 of the TFEU; emphasis added).

In essence, the idea was that the EU’s guiding principles, which allowed the political, social and economic development of Europe should guide the EU’s global action. Now the pact, internally and globally, was that liberalism would bring more diffused wellbeing (social, political and economic) to more people. The EU, as the liberal order at large, was all the more supported by those affected, the more it brought advantages. The promises of liberalism on the one side, and of European integration on the

other, were high. This is why the EU's failures to deliver severely damaged the EU and the liberal order at large. Three have been the most relevant failures to deliver in recent years (not in the past) by Liberal Europe: economic equality and solidarity, liberal democracy and pluralism.

### Equality and solidarity

It was clear to those who drafted the Laeken declaration that the responsibility to shoulder the burden of globalization was necessary also to respond to the concerns of EU citizens. On the contrary, liberal Europe's promise of wellbeing and diffused growth crashed not so much with Europe's relative economic decline,<sup>3</sup> but with rising inequalities and social polarization in Europe, both in objective and subjective/cognitive terms.

In the 1980s, in Europe, the average income of the richest 10 per cent was seven times higher than that of the poorest 10 per cent; in 2017, it was around 9 ½ times higher (OECD 2017: 7). Income inequalities are however unevenly distributed in Europe, with the UK, Eastern and Southern European countries being much more unequal with respect to northern European countries (although it has increased also in traditionally egalitarian north European countries such as Finland and Sweden).<sup>4</sup> An even more dramatic picture of absolute inequality emerges if one compares the average per capita income of the richest and poorest national quintiles in Europe. The richest national quintile in Europe is that of Luxembourg with an annual income of 73,832 euros (at exchange rates) and 61,304 euros at purchasing power parity (PPP). The poorest quintile is that of Romania with an annual income of only 685 euros or 1,289 euros in PPP. The ratio is more than 1:100 at exchange rates and 1:47 in PPP. Furthermore, these indicators of extreme inequality have deteriorated further since 2009. This implies that a person's living standards in the EU depends more on the country s/he is born and grow up in than on whether s/he belongs to the

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<sup>3</sup> The US and Europe are losing relative economic might, but to a much lesser degree than it seemed a few years ago and maintain a lead position: US GDP share 24 %; EU 21 %; China 14 %; India about 3 % (World Bank data February 2017).

<sup>4</sup> OECD Income Distribution Database, <http://www.oecd.org/social/income-distribution-database.htm>.

relevant upper or lower stratum of their national society. It also depends on age, as the worst off are young generations, who have replaced the old in terms of risk of poverty. As for wealth, currently 10 per cent of the wealthiest households hold 50 per cent of total wealth; the 40 per cent least wealthy owns little over 3 per cent (OECD 2017); again, with national differences. To such a wealth inequality are associated inequalities in terms of education and life expectancy. Given the fact that the young of worst off families (and even more of non-native-borns) are the most affected, it is expected that inequality trends are replicated with the next generation (OECD 2017). The net effect is polarization, both geographic (within countries and among countries) and social polarization: industrialized areas vs deindustrialized peripheries, South-Eastern vs. Northern countries... A geography which coincides with the geography of dissatisfaction reproduced in recent elections: the geography of vote in the 2016 British referendum, the 2017 French Presidential elections, the 2018 Italian parliamentary elections all tell the same story: one of domestically divided countries. This is not at all a solely European phenomenon (as the US Presidential elections of 2016 demonstrate), but in Europe, it delegitimizes not only so-called neoliberal policies, but the EU's liberal ontology and the EU's historical experiment as such. An unwelcome output of the failed Europe's promise of combining welfare with free trade in order to diffuse wealth, enact solidarity and guarantee a progressive future.

### Liberal democracy

The EU's failure to "shoulder its responsibilities in the governance of globalisation" so to avoid the negative economic effects of a globalization which led to rising inequalities and relative impoverishment, had important repercussions in the Europeans' attitudes towards Europe and the established elites (Kuhn et al. 2016). The geographic map of euroscepticism, populism and support to illiberal tendencies largely overlapped with that of economic inequalities and relative impoverishment, with a sharp societal distinction between highly educated young employees of big cities (much more likely to share a cosmopolitan/European identity, supportive of the integration process and of an EU leading role in the liberal world

order) and middle-aged workers of depressed areas. The latter group being particularly sensitive to feel ontologically insecure and call for “protection” for their own interests and identity – as Mr Macron has clearly understood, proposing “une Europe qui protège” (“a Europe that protects”, see Macron 2017). It is a group that is largely adverse to the core elements of the European liberal integration project: free movement, free trade, enlargement, and common currency. It is the group that feels most threatened by immigration and adopts nativists’ perspectives on national identity, a group which calls for a new Westphalianism, and which is not reluctant to support illiberal tendencies.

The rise of terrorist attacks in Europe since 2004 and the fragmentation and complexification of security threats has further challenged liberal democracy from within. Global terrorism showed the vulnerability of liberal societies and triggered an ontological anxiety which allowed reductions of individual liberties in the name of an enhanced security. Citizens are ready to give up part of their liberty in exchange for more (perceived) security, gradually allowing for (even demanding) the transformation of their liberal democracies into simplified electoral systems.

The most clear political embodiment of such attitudes at the moment of writing (2018) is the Hungarian leader Viktor Orbán, who since several years legitimizes illiberal attitudes and regimes in his public speeches and political practices (Freedom House 2017). Tellingly, in a 2014 speech delivered before an audience of ethnic Hungarians in Romania, he accused liberal values to “embody corruption, sex and violence”. For this reason, he argued, “the new state that we are constructing in Hungary is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state”, a non-liberal democracy. Internationally, declared Orbán, “the stars of the international analysts today are Singapore, China, India, Russia and Turkey” (Orbán 2014).

Orbán, however, is not anymore an isolated case. The political results have been particularly visible in the 2017-18 rounds of elections and referenda. In October 2017, the elections in Austria led to the formation of a government coalition which includes the Freedom Party (FPÖ), the reactionary and anti-European party that European governments had managed to contain in 1999. In Italy, the populist and sovranist Lega of Matteo Salvini took 17.4 per cent (from 4 per cent in the 2013 elections). The anti-es-

establishment Five Stars Movement got the striking majority of 32.7 per cent, becoming Italy's first party. In Hungary, the Eurosceptic, nativist and sovranist Viktor Orbán has been reconfirmed as Prime Minister in the 2018 elections with 50 per cent of votes, followed by the even more right-wing Jobbik Party (18.9 per cent). In Poland, the anti-democratic drift of the ultra-nationalist and anti-European government of Mateusz Morawiecki continues (Wojcie and Strzelecki 2017). The countries of the Visegrad group (i.e. Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia) are now united against Brussels on migrants, media freedom, and human rights (Freedom House 2017). Even where the populist forces did not win the elections, they got important results. In Germany, the conservative and populist force of *Alternativ für Deutschland* (AfD) obtained more than two million votes. In the Netherlands, the xenophobic party of Geert Wilders (PPV) gained five seats and shortened the distance from the first party, the conservative *Freedom and Democracy Party*. Even in France, if the victory of the young pro-European Emmanuel Macron in the 2017 French Presidential election gave progressive forces a sigh of relief, it cannot overshadow the striking fact that Marine Le Pen, of the *Front National*, passed the first round and challenged Macron to the Presidency.

The wave of populist nationalism that overwhelmed Europe has also conditioned the tones and decisions of other political forces and made the foreign policy (European and international) of Member States less predictable and bipartisan than in the past. However, while in the past authoritarian drifts in some Member States (such as Haider's Austria) had been punished in a timely manner (and not only in the figurative sense) by the other Member States, today the blatant democratic setbacks in Hungary and Poland, the xenophobic positions of political movements everywhere in Europe, and the open violation of common standards by the Visegrad countries (especially with regard to immigration and asylum rules) have not been sanctioned in a quick and strong way.<sup>5</sup> It seems that Europe is

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<sup>5</sup> Although the deterioration of the rule of law in the country have been expressed since 2016, it was only at the end of 2017, after years of ascertained violations, that the Commission invoked Article 7 of the TEU for "a clear risk of a serious breach of the rule of law". At the moment of writing it is still to be seen whether the Council, with a four-fifths majority, will decide to suspend some of Poland's rights (including the right to vote in the Council).

becoming accustomed to a new normality that denies itself and the values on which it is based.

The split between national-populist Euro-sceptic and other forces (including euro-critical ones) does not only affect countries, but also the domestic societies, as shown by the results of the polarised vote for the referendum that led to Brexit, the vote for the French Presidential election, and the Polish and Dutch elections. If liberal democracy is a pillar of the liberal international order, in the West, and more precisely in Europe, the threat comes from within. Moreover, if Europe is ever more illiberal, how can it support the liberal order internationally?

## Pluralism

The third element, connected to the previous one, in the crisis of the liberal order in Europe is what can be labelled the “ontological challenge”. Liberalism was based on a cosmopolitan worldview, on the idea of man as primarily a “citizen”, with a non-ascriptive (based on achievement) socio-political identity. In multicultural societies like the US this led to a steady affirmation of a double track policy: adopt measures to protect members of groups that are known to have previously suffered from discrimination (affirmative action), and at the same time nullify the political relevance of ascriptive identities (based on predetermined factors such as sex and race) portraying them as irrelevant for citizenship rights and national identity (the hyphenated identity – Afro-American, Asian-American etc.). In Europe, different countries experimented with different roots to national identity and citizenship in growingly multicultural societies.

Since the 1950s, Western liberal democracies have struggled to develop strategies to deal with diversity in societies until that moment considered homogeneous (secular, white, and Christian). Racism and discrimination characterised the European societies’ responses to the arrival of people from the former colonies in the 1950s and 1960s. This time the “Other” was not the assimilated other European of the past, but it was a somatically different other, considered different and – frequently – inferior. His difference was perceived as a threat to European national identity, and the history of Europe is also the history of the responses that different societies

have provided to the challenges of national identity in a growingly multicultural society (Chin 2017; Taras 2012). However, European societies gradually developed ways to cope with cultural and ethnic pluralism according to the basic principle of equal treatment of citizens in a liberal society. Gradually European societies found ways to accommodate elements of group rights without abandoning liberalism's individualist perspective.<sup>6</sup>

The European integration started from the beginning as a liberal project and since the late 1960s human rights steadily gained importance in EC legislation. Eventually, human rights norms have been "mainstreamed", becoming integrated in all aspects of policy-making and implementation. At the same time, since its creation, having to pull together countries with different cultures, the EC recognised that national cultural differences should be respected and protected (Article 151 EC Treaty). The Charter of Fundamental Rights – legally binding since the Lisbon Treaty – affirms that "The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity" (Article 22) and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin and religion or belief. The Member States are bound to combat public incitement to violence and hatred against people of different race, colour, religion, or national or ethnic descent by means of criminal law. Yet, even when there is not proper discrimination, evidence of a tension of an ethno-cultural type within European liberal societies is again all the more clear. The discrimination on the basis of religion embedded into the request of Poland and Slovakia (Financial Times 2015; BBC 2015) to accept only Christian asylum seekers not to put the national culture "at risk" is but one of the most visible manifestations of a general malaise.

For a long time liberal democracies under-evaluated the role of cultural identities and their link with political identities in the construction of legitimate institutions. No liberal democracy has ever been able to transform its people into mere "citizens", but they have made attempts. In the past few decades, particularly since the end of the Cold War and, more so, since

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<sup>6</sup> The debate on the possibility to combine liberalism and multiculturalism is rich and articulated. One of the most known authors claiming the compatibility of liberalism and multiculturalism is Kymlicka (1989, 1995, 2007).

9/11, ascriptive identities have started to call loud to be recognised. Liberal democracies had to fight against the obstacle of multicultural societies where ethno-national groups called for a political recognition, not only in Iraq or Afghanistan (where they tried to export the model) but also inside the West. The European construction embedded the idea that an overall European citizenship could coexist with national and (enriching) cultural diversities. However, particularly since the early 2000s multicultural coexistence showed its limits in several European societies and the surge of Islamic terrorism significantly worsened the situation (Chin 2017). Between 2010 and 2011, the leaders of France, Britain and Germany publicly proclaimed that multilateralism had failed in their countries (BBC 2010; 2011; France24 2011). No specific national European way to multiculturalism had succeeded, no all-European formula had been found. When the so-called European “crisis of migrants” arose in 2015, the arguments were politically used to depict migrants as a threat to European communities’ ontological security. Migration and the cultural diversity issue were eventually crucial arguments in the debates leading to the success of the nationalist, eurosceptic, largely illiberal forces that won the elections (or referenda) in Hungary, Poland, Austria, and the UK and which had unprecedented electoral successes in Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands.

To summarise, three important promises of liberal Europe were missed: wealth and enhanced socio-economic equality, liberal democracy, and pluralism. The three elements are linked among themselves and part of global trends in the crisis of liberalism. However, their impact on Europe (and the EU in particular) as a pillar of the liberal world order are particularly troublesome: they threaten the EU’s core identity, the legitimacy recognised to European institutions as bearers of collectively shared values, the ability for the EU to undertake collective policies in support of the liberal order, as well as the EU’s credibility in the eyes of the others.

### ...and abroad

The first signals of transformed “role conceptualization” and “role performance” are rather clear and they point to a compromise with (if not a metamorphosis of) the “adjectivised power” Europe. Following the new

momentum, the EU documents have abandoned the emphatic self-representation of a force for good, with only values and no interests. However, this “normalization” has also been characterised by a reduced faith in the possibilities to shape the world according to its principles. The 2016 Global Strategy called for “principled pragmatism”, a catchy oxymoron to describe a more pragmatic and – hence – efficient foreign policy which however has to be grounded on some fundamental principles. Even the objectives of EU’s foreign policy are described in a *transformed continuity* with the past (to keep with the register). The keyword in this respect is “resilience”, which in psychology implies the ability to stand still before difficulties in life, and that applied to states and societies conveys the idea of an ability to “resist” more than an ability to transform in a progressive way. It is a word for moments of crisis, used into the political debate by US President Obama (Selchow 2016), and then used in the EU documents in a rather polisemic way, from ability for European societies to resist and keep their living standards, to the ability of third countries to develop enough to prevent civil conflicts but also emigration towards Europe. In recent documents (European Commission 2017), it is a word for a joined-up and comprehensive approach to challenges.

However, the real transformation in the EU’s contribution to the liberal order is visible looking at actual policies. Michael Smith and Richard Youngs (2018) convincingly argue that the EU is gradually adopting a “contingent” form of liberalism, mixing liberal and *realpolitik* strategic principles in a number of areas, from international trade, its relation with Donald Trump’s USA, its approach towards different countries in the Eastern neighbourhood.

In international trade, despite continuing to adhere to a liberal economic order, the EU has begun to exhibit a degree of “soft merchantilism” (Smith and Youngs 2018: 47). In several trade negotiations, the EU insisted on multiple safeguards and limits to trade liberalization. This is not that surprising since the EU has never been a supporter of liberalization at all costs, rather it has always combined domestic protection with trade liberalization. However, the protectionist mood has risen with respect to the past. Some new trade agreements, like the EU-Canada Free Trade Agreement (CETA), were held hostage by the worries of local European produc-

ers backed by populist forces for months. Moreover, new mechanisms screening inward foreign investments are under study by the Commission (Smith and Youngs 2018: 47). In its relations with Donald Trump's gradual dismantlement of multilateral agreements (from climate change to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP) and threat to collectively achieved agreements (as in the case of that with Iran) the EU has balanced blame with compromise. In the Eastern neighbourhood, the EU adapted its effort to uphold and promote democratic norms to what could be feasible given each country's role in the Russia sphere of influence. In other words, argue Smith and Youngs, the EU "shifted towards a more *consequentialist-utilitarian* foreign policy, more concerned with immediate outcomes and less uniquely driven by the Union's institutionally embedded liberal norms and identity" (2018: 52). This can be easily regarded as the "normalization" of the EU's actorness, responding to the need to compromise principles and pragmatism. Not by chance, the EU Global Strategy of 2016 called for "principled pragmatism" in EU's external relations.

However, the area in which EU's policy has more been significantly affected by the internal illiberal trends that we have described above, and also the area in which the liberal credentials of the EU are more put under strain, is that of migration. The issue is particularly telling as it stands at the crossroads of the three challenges to the European liberal order that we described above: economic, political and cultural.

For the EU, coping with the challenge of migration has a triple strategic meaning: first, it implies envisaging solutions to a long-term phenomenon that is there to stay; second, it means identifying ways to cope with Europe's demographic decline and its economic shortcomings (cf. Ceccorulli, Fassi, Lucarelli 2015); third, it entails figuring out which kind of actor the EU is and will be: an inward-looking one, committed to 'secure' its homeland and borders at the cost of compromising the migrants' rights as human beings, or one upholding its liberal values and fundamental rights (which would imply upholding human rights and non-discrimination). The challenge is not an easy one, and different concerns and justice claims are at play (Fassi and Lucarelli 2017; Ceccorulli 2018a, 2018b); however, it is indisputable that the European reaction to the so-called migrant and refugee crisis in 2015-2016 was largely a response to the pressures of ever

more frightened societies and to the EU's ontological insecurity that the response by the Member States generated.

To the sudden rise in number of sea and land arrivals of migrants and asylum seekers in 2015<sup>7</sup>, the EU responded with implementation packages of its Agenda for migration (2015), which gradually shifted the balance between its double aim of saving migrants' lives and protecting its borders, in favour of the second. The process which triggered such a shift was the concern that the migration crisis was putting one of the most important achievements of European integration – the Schengen agreement – at risk (Ceccorulli 2018b). Faced with the temporary uncoordinated suspension of Schengen in several countries, the construction of physical fences to stop migration flows in Hungary and the refusal by several states (particularly the Visegrad countries) to implement the relocation scheme envisaged by the EU), the Commission adopted a second implementation package which rose attention to borders protection (by creating the European Border and Coast Guard and strengthening the operation Triton).

Since then the EU and its Member States have adopted measures to enhance border protection and patrolling of the Mediterranean sea to fight smuggling (through the operations Triton and Eunavfor Med Sophia), collect/detain migrants at the points of arrivals (the hotspot system implemented in Greece and Italy) to avoid secondary movements of asylum seekers (through improved fingerprinting), improve return effectiveness through strengthened relations with third states, externalize the control of migration to third countries (as in the case of the EU-Turkey Statement or of the Italy-Libya agreement supported by the EU), and proposing a Regulation on a common list of safe countries of origin which de facto would render some asylum requests automatically unfounded on the basis of the nationality of the asylum seeker. What is at risk the most, in this scenario, are the human rights of migrants, which several attentive observers and NGOs denounce to be systematically violated, not only in the

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<sup>7</sup> Arrivals from the Mediterranean Sea were 216,054 in 2014 and reached the peak of 1,015,078 in 2015 (UNHCR data - <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean#>). The number of asylum applicants passed from 627,000 in 2014 to around 1.3 million in both 2015 and 2016 (Eurostat, Asylum Statistics - [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics)).

Libyan camps (Amnesty International 2017) or in Turkey (Human Rights Watch 2018), but also within Europe (Human Rights Watch 2018), where the hotspot system has de facto created different categories of asylum seekers depending on their nationality, hence allowing different rights and priorities and not guaranteeing adequate living conditions. In other words, the net effects of the “securitization” of Schengen (Ceccorulli 2018b) has been a policy of migration and asylum which has led to a significant reduction of the level of human rights standards in Europe and which has brought a dangerous (for the migrants) externalization of policies.

The launch of a Trust Fund for Africa, looks like a promising return to a holistic, long term and joint-up approach to cope with the root causes of migration, a step in the direction of a concrete implementation of the EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) launched in 2011. However, the way in which the Trust Fund has been shaped so far is not particularly promising. With its limited budget of 2.5 billion euros for Africa and the Middle East (23 eligible recipients), it is not likely that the Fund can have a significant impact on the receiving societies, particularly since most of it is directed to enhance border control and migration management rather than development (Castillejo 2014). In general, the link made in the GAMM between development and migration rises the concern, also within the European Parliament, that there could be an “instrumentalization’ of development aid for migration management purposes” (European Parliament 2016). Smith and Youngs report that “In early 2016, a group of EU donors pushed the OECD to change its definition of ‘aid’ to include some military spending and funds for refugee camps.” It also seems that some Member States have exercised pressure on the Commission to allow the “development funds to be used for border controls and other measures to restrict migrant flows” (2018: 53-54). Even the fund to train and equip the Libyan coast guard to intercept and return back migrants (200 million euros) points to a particular liberal actorness on the side of the EU. Here again, pragmatism seems to prevail over principles.

## In *lieu* of a conclusion

Europe, and particularly the EU, has for a long time represented a pillar and a laboratory of the liberal order. The EU's role in the world was very much shaped around a self-understanding as a liberal democratic area which applies to its foreign policy the same liberal values that have shaped its internal development. Now liberalism is in trouble within Europe in the first place: to use Emmanuel Macron's words before the European Parliament (14 April 2018), Europe is in a state of "civil war" and is afflicted with a "fascination with the illiberal", putting its "unique model" at risk. Liberalism does not seem to have delivered on at least three fundamental fronts (which are also three aspects of the crisis of liberalism): economic equality and solidarity, liberal democracy and pluralism. Europe is today less egalitarian, less democratic and less open to cultural diversity. Such a Europe, under the pressure of populist and new nationalist forces is also more concerned for its own survival as a union. Its foreign policy can only be affected by these internal developments: on the one side, populist parties provide less guarantees for the maintenance of the traditional bipartisan pillars of foreign policy (national and European) than traditional parties did. In second place, they are frequently Eurosceptic and less eager to give competence to the EU in relevant external matters. Third, the EU tends to be dominated by its internal struggle and ready to compromise its liberal values if this appears to be necessary to save achievements of the integration process (as in the case of migration and the challenges to the Schengen agreement).

The root causes of illiberal tendencies in Europe (as in the world in general) are too structural to think that they will easily disappear, too grounded in the deep dissatisfaction of those who most suffered the negative effects of globalization and felt abandoned by the distant "Berlaymont man". Only by addressing those deep causes, keeping faith to its founding values and upholding its liberal order, can the EU hope to save itself and start again to play the role of a liberal power in a not-so-liberal-anymore world. But how can the domestically troubled and divided Europe described above find the energy to address such causes, keeping faith to its original values?

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