

16:00 – 17:30

EU SECURITY POLICY AND ITS EXTERNAL BORDERS - WHAT SIGNALS FOR CITIZENS?

- Trineke Palm, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Igor Kovač, University of Cincinnati, USA
- Laris Gaiser, Slovenian Paneuropean Movement, Slovenia

Moderator: Dejan Hribar, Slovenian Paneuropean Movement, Slovenia

When the migration crisis hit Europe, no one was prepared. EU officials remained deaf when Italy and Spain warned about the situation that they had with migrants on their borders. Therefore the migration wave caught EU officials and leaders completely unprepared, leaving member states to take the situation in their hands, and thus contributing to political disunity in the EU, a further rise in Euroscepticism. Along with the question of the EU's external borders, the question of security of the EU and its citizens was high on the political agenda. This panel will discuss how security and border issues (building walls and fences) helped the flourishing of Euroscepticism.

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Due to citizens' mistrust in EU institutions and decision makers, we have to build on a strong bottom-up approach, empower the citizens and civil society organisations to be able to understand the importance of continuing on the path of European integration. Moreover, building trust and fostering mutual cooperation between citizens and policy makers at EU level is crucial.

The aim of the project is to attract and engage European citizens and civil society organisations in structural dialogue with EU policy and decision makers on how to reduce Euroscepticism and spread the realisation that European integration is still necessary. Particular focus will be put on increasing the level of understanding of the EU policy-making process, how to transform and translate citizens' ideas and needs in the EU decision-making process, how to improve the communication channels between citizens, civil society organisations and decision makers, and on the importance of having unified and strong common European policies and approaches. By offering a platform for engaging European citizens in debates on their and thus our common future, this project promises to be innovative, inclusive and interactive.

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CONFERENCE

EUROSCEPTICISM AND ITS ROLE IN INTEGRATING THE EUROPEAN UNION

PROGRAMME

7-8 MAY
2018

FLORENCE
ITALY



Co-founded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union

MONDAY, 7 MAY 2018

► Venue: University of Florence (Italy), via delle Pandette, Firenze

14:00 – 17:00

CITIZENS' AGORA – EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS PERSPECTIVES

- Laris Gaiser, Slovenian Paneuropean Movement, Slovenia
- Luciano Bozzo, University of Florence, Italy
- Walter Skerk, RAI, Italy

19:00

NETWORKING EVENING

The European Union has reached a breaking point. It has never been faced with so many life-threatening challenges to its existence since 1957. Political disunity on key issues for the EU (Brexit, instability in the neighbourhood, refugee crisis, security threats, etc.) is driving nation states and citizens towards more nation-focused policies. Social challenges (e.g. youth unemployment) play a major role in raising distrust towards European integration. These elements have largely contributed to the rise of Euroscepticism across the EU. According to a 2016 Pew Research Center analysis, Euroscepticism has increased dramatically in the EU (reaching 47 % of those unfavourable to the EU). In addition, the EU has been weakened by the rise of extreme right- and left-wing parties, which are winning (regional and national) elections. The aim of the agora is to discuss these challenges and get feedback on how they affect the shaping of the European political and social landscape, particularly with respect to their influence on citizens' perception about the future of Europe.

TUESDAY, 8 MAY 2018

► Venue: University of Florence (Italy), via delle Pandette, Firenze (building D15, room 004)

09:00 – 11:00

WHAT DRIVES THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION TOWARDS THE EU?

- Adam Casals, former Catalan Ambassador in Austria, Spain
- José-Apeles Santolaria de Puey y Cruells, University of Barcelona, Spain
- Mattia Zulianello, University of Florence, Italy

Moderator: Laris Gaiser, Slovenian Paneuropean Movement, Slovenia

2016 and 2017 were turning years in terms of the European political landscape. European citizens had two options: to vote against Europe, or support the very weak EU structure and hope for the best. It turned out in many countries (Spain, France, Netherlands, Germany, to a lesser extent Italy, etc.) that citizens opted for Europe, but the opposition still got its stake (particularly with spreading fear about migration, weak EU political leadership, too much EU policies in national legislation, huge democratic deficit at the EU level, etc.). This panel will discuss the essence and impetus that drive the opposition against the EU. What can citizens do, what can political elites do, what can the civil society do?

11:00 – 11:30

COFFEE BREAK

11:30 – 13:00

EUROSCEPTICISM AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA

- Patrick Bijsmans, University of Maastricht, Netherlands
- Massimo Balducci, University of Florence, Italy
- Luka Lisjak Gabrijelčič, daily newspaper Delo, Slovenia

Moderator: Rainhard Kloucek, Austrian Paneuropean Movement

The founding fathers of the European Union struggled hard to reconcile European nations. They saw an integrated Europe as the most efficient tool to secure peace, stability and prosperity. It seems that the European project was successful until the financial and economic crisis erupted in 2009. Events that followed in the next years almost brought the EU to the edge of disintegration. Euroscepticism and doubt about the common European project prevailed over Euro-optimism for the first time in decades. The media play a crucial role in this process, and their attitude towards the EU as such and particularly to the integration process has a great impact. The panel will discuss how the media communicated EU policies to its citizens and how they tackled the rise of Euroscepticism.

13:00 - 14:00

NETWORKING BREAK

► Venue: University of Florence (Italy), via delle Pandette, Firenze (building D4, room 107)

14:00 – 15:30

PERSPECTIVES ABOUT EU FROM GLOBAL PLAYERS

- Davide Fiammenghi, University of Bologna, Italy
- Daniela Irerra, Mediterranean Affairs, Italy
- Daniela Vitiello, University of Florence, Italy

Moderator: Igor Kovač, University of Cincinnati, USA

The EU has been in the shadow of big global players like the USA, China and Russia. It is basically known around the world the most for its development aid, thus relying on its soft power and cultural, scientific, research and innovation diplomacy. The election victory of current US president Donald Trump was a moment of truth for the EU to answer a fundamental question: Are we able to set and conduct our own common foreign, security and defence policies? The aim of the panel is to discuss how global players see the EU, and highlight the EU's strengths and weaknesses in the international arena.

15:30 – 16:00

COFFEE BREAK



Turn around →