

**T.C.**  
**TURKISH-GERMAN UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE INTEGRATION OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION: A COMPARISON WITH THE  
OTHER CRISES OF EUROPE**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Zübeyde ÖZ**

**ADVISOR**  
**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang WESSELS**

**İSTANBUL, June 2023**

**T.C.**  
**TURKISH-GERMAN UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE INTEGRATION OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION: A COMPARISON WITH THE  
OTHER CRISES OF EUROPE**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Zübeyde ÖZ**  
**(208101014)**

**ADVISOR**  
**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang WESSELS**

**İSTANBUL, June 2023**

**T.C.**  
**TURKISH-GERMAN UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE INTEGRATION OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION: A COMPARISON WITH THE  
OTHER CRISES OF EUROPE**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Zübeyde ÖZ**  
**(208101014)**

Thesis Submission Date to Institute : 06.07.2023

Thesis Defence Date : 26.07.2023

Thesis Advisor : Prof. Dr. Wolfgang WESSELS

Other Jury Members: Prof. Dr. Manuel Andreas KNOLL

: Prof. Dr. Nergiz ÖZKURAL KÖROĞLU

**İSTANBUL, June 2023**

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name-Last Name  
Zübeyde ÖZ

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank the financial support provided by TÜBİTAK BİDEB 2210/A Genel Yurt İçi Yüksek Lisans Burs Programı- for this thesis. I am sincerely grateful to TÜBİTAK BİDEB 2210/A GENEL Yurt İçi Yüksek Lisans Burs Programı- for their valuable support in making this study possible.

First, I would like to express my infinite gratitude to my thesis advisors, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang WESSELS, and Prof. Dr. Hartmut MARHOLD. Undoubtedly, their knowledge and guidance throughout my studies have greatly contributed to the writing of this thesis. I would also like to thank the Turkish-German University professors who have played a significant role in my academic journey. In addition, I would like to express my endless thanks to Prof. Dr. Nergiz ÖZKURAL KÖROĞLU and Prof. Dr. Manuel Andreas KNOLL for taking part in my thesis jury and guiding my thesis in getting its final form.

Lastly, I would like to express my eternal gratitude to my family, who have always been a source of support. I offer my heartfelt thanks to my spouse, Recep ÖZ, whose knowledge and patience have always been by my side, and to my daughter, Zeynep Halise, who is an endless source of inspiration.

For all the women and children who are most quickly and most affected by the crisis...

## ÖZET

### **COVID-19’UN AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ ENTEGRASYONUNA ETKİSİ: AVRUPA’NIN DİĞER KRİZLERİYLE KARŞILAŞTIRMA**

Bu çalışmanın ana amacı 2019 yılının sonunda ortaya çıkan Kovid-19'un Avrupa entegrasyonuna olan etkisini bütüncül bir yaklaşımla incelemektir. Kovid-19 hem üye devletlere hem de Avrupa Birliği'ne kapasite, koordinasyon ve dayanışma anlamında bir meydan okuma yaratmıştır. Kovid-19'un yarattığı panik ortamı nedeniyle üye devletler kısa süreli de olsa Avrupa Birliği'nin ortak politikalarından uzaklaşmıştır. Avrupa Birliği'nin de koordinasyon sağlama sorunları nedeniyle zayıf kalacağı düşünülmüştür. Çalışmada, Kovid-19'un entegrasyona ekonomik ve kurumsal etkileri olduğu, ayrıca devletler arasındaki eşitsizlikleri ortaya çıkardığı görülmüştür. Avrupa Birliği krize öncelikle mevcut mekanizmaları ve kurumlarıyla tepki verirken, bir yandan da krize karşı önemli ve yeni bir yaklaşım geliştirerek Next Generation EU (NGEU)'yu sunmuştur. NGEU bütçeyi neredeyse ikiye katlayan bir kaynak olmasının yanında bütçeyle entegre olarak tasarlanmış ve üye devletlerin sağlıkla ilgili altyapı sorunlarının çözülmesi, krizden etkilenen sektörlerin desteklenmesi, sürdürülebilirlik ve yeşil dönüşüm konularında da yatırımı teşvik eden mali bir destek olmuştur. Üye devletlere hibe ve kredi olarak sunulan fonların Avrupa Komisyonu'na verilen yetkiyle piyasalardan kaynak bulma yoluyla finanse edilmesiyle ilk defa birlik çatısı altında krizin riskinin devletler tarafından ortaklaşa paylaşılması söz konusu olmuştur. Bu Avrupa entegrasyonu açısından önemli bir dönüm noktasıdır. Kovid-19 etkileri itibariyle Avrupa Birliği'nin yaşadığı diğer krizlerinden de özellikler taşısa da hem öğrenilen dersler ve tarihsel birikim sayesinde var olan mekanizma ve kurumlarla birlikte mücadele etme hem de yeni bir araç yaratma sonucu itibariyle diğer krizlerden çözüm olarak farklılaşmıştır. Bu kadar büyük bir kriz karşısında üye devletlerin birliğin dağılmasını göze alamaması ve ortak bir fon oluşturmaya olumlu bakmaları -her ne kadar ulusal çıkarları için olsa da- ve mali bir çatı

altında birleşmeleri entegrasyonu derinleştirmiştir, üstelik bu derinleşme devletlerin egemenliğinin daha fazla olduğu sağlık alanında başlamıştır. Ayrıca Avrupa Birliği, NGEU ile gelecekteki krizlere karşı kendini hazırlayarak iyileştirme yatırımlarını sürdürülebilirlik hedefleri çerçevesinde uygulamaya devam etmiştir. Avrupa Birliği doğal olarak sonraki krizlere karşı kendini savunacak mekanizmaları da bugünden Kovid-19'u fırsat bilerek hazırlamaya çalışmaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında kovid-19'un entegrasyon üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak için göç krizi ile karşılaştırma yapılmıştır. Bu karşılaştırma gösterdi ki her iki kriz de ülkelerin egemenliklerinin fazla olduğu bir alanda ortaya çıksa da ve sistemi test eden krizler olsa da kovid-19 her ülkeyi derinden etkilerken, göç krizi her ülkeyi aynı oranda etkilemiştir. Ayrıca, kovid-19 krizinin sağlık gibi teknik bir alanda ortaya çıkması ve finansal riskler barındırması görece AB'nin deneyimli olduğu bir konuyken, göç konusu politik uzlaşmaya varma noktasında oldukça zorlu bir alandır. Göç kriziyle yapılan karşılaştırma krizlerde ülkelerin iradelerinin ve kararlarının etkili çözümler bulmak için önemli olduğunu gösterdi. Bununla birlikte, covid-19 krizinde bir kez ulusal devletler tarafından kararlar alındığında, uluslararası mekanizmalar etkinliklerini artırmış ve kurumlar krizi aşmak için katkı sağlamışlardır. Dolayısıyla, kovid-19 krizinde görülen dönüştürücü etki, göç krizinde elde edilememiştir. Diğer krizlerden farklı olarak kovid-19 krizinde ortak bir sonuca ulaşmada Avrupa Birliği'nin mevcut mekanizmaları ve geçmiş deneyimlerinden elde ettiği dersler de şüphesiz önemlidir. Bu nedenle, Avrupa Birliği tarihi de Avrupa Birliği entegrasyonunun en önemli göstergesi olduğu için bu çalışmada yer almıştır. Bu çalışma, liberal intergovernmentalizm ve neo-fonksiyonalizm teorileri kapsamında incelenmiştir. Çalışmada krize verilen ilk tepkiyi anlamak için kovid-19 krizinin çıktığı ilk aylardaki Avrupa Birliği'nin tepkileri analiz etmiştir. Krizin boyutlarının anlaşılması için uzun dönemli analizlerle de desteklenmesi mümkündür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Covid-19, Avrupa Birliği, Avrupa Entegrasyonu, Covid-19 Etkileri, Next Generation EU, Göç Krizi

**Tarih:** 06.06.2023

# **ABSTRACT**

## **THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE INTEGRATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: A COMPARISON WITH THE OTHER CRISES OF EUROPE**

The main aim of this study is to comprehensively examine the impact of COVID-19, which emerged at the end of 2019, on European integration. COVID-19 has posed challenges in capacity, coordination, and solidarity for member states and the European Union. Due to the panic, member states temporarily deviated from common EU policies. The EU was also thought to be weakened due to coordination problems. The study reveals that COVID-19 has had an impact on integration economically, institutionally, and in terms of inequalities between states. While the European Union and its institutions initially responded to the crisis using existing mechanisms and institutions, they also developed a significant and new approach by introducing the Next Generation EU (NGEU). NGEU, besides almost doubling the budget, has been designed to integrate with the budget and provides financial support for addressing member states' healthcare infrastructure issues, supporting sectors affected by the crisis, and promoting investments in sustainability and green deal. The funds provided to member states in the form of grants and loans are financed through borrowing, authorized by the European Commission, marking a significant milestone in risk-sharing among states under the EU fiscal framework. In terms of its effects, COVID-19 shares similarities with other crises experienced by the European Union. However, the Covid-19 crisis differs from other crises in terms of the solutions derived from both the lessons learned and the historical accumulation, as well as the creation of a new tool, NGEU. Faced with such a massive crisis, member states' unwillingness to risk the disintegration of the Union and their positive outlook towards creating a common fund have deepened integration, particularly in the field of healthcare, where states exercise more sovereignty. Furthermore, with



NGEU, the European Union has continued its investment in improvement, preparing itself for future crises while pursuing sustainability goals. Naturally, the European Union is also striving to prepare itself for future crises, taking COVID-19 as an opportunity. Furthermore, a comparison was made with the migration crisis to understand the effects of covid-19 on integration. The study demonstrates that despite both the migration crisis and the COVID-19 crisis arising in domains where states possess a considerable degree of sovereignty and serve as tests for the system, COVID-19 has affected every country, whereas the migration crisis did not impact all countries on the same extent. COVID-19 emerged in a technical field such as health and entailed financial risks, areas in which the EU had relatively more experience. On the other hand, the migration issue proved to be a challenging domain to reach a political consensus. The comparison with the migration crisis demonstrated that the will and decisions of the states are crucial in finding effective solutions during crises. Still, once decisions are made by nation-states, supranational mechanisms have increased their effectiveness, and institutions and actors have contributed to overcoming the crisis in covid-19 crisis. Hence, a transformative impact seen in COVID-19 could not be achieved in the migration crisis. Lessons learned from existing mechanisms and past experiences of the European Union are undoubtedly important in achieving a common outcome. Thus, the history of the European Union is also included in this study as it is the most important indicator of European Union integration. This study has been conducted within the framework of both liberal intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism theories. The initial responses of the European Union during the early months of the COVID-19 crisis have been analyzed to understand the initial reactions to the crisis. Long-term analyses can also support understanding the dimensions of the crisis.

**Key Words:** Covid-19, European Union, European Integration, Impact of Covid-19, Next Generation EU, Migration Crisis

**Date:** 06.06.2023

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE NO</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
ÖZET .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATION .....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1.RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY .....	3
1.2.RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS.....	4
1.3.METHODOLOGY.....	4
1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	5
1.5. OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS .....	6
CHAPTER 2.....	8
2. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION HISTORY .....	8
2.1. THE RISE OF THE EU FROM THE ASHES: BETWEEN 1950s-1980s .....	9
2.2. DEEPENING INTEGRATION: SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT AND MAASTRICHT .....	12
2.3.CENTURY OF CRISES FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION .	15
CHAPTER 3.....	19
3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES .....	19
3.1. NEO-FUNCTIONALISM.....	20

3.2. LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTALISM.....	22
CHAPTER 4.....	24
4. COVID-19 CRISIS .....	24
4.1. BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS.....	24
4.2. THE CHALLENGES REVEALED BY COVID-19 .....	25
CHAPTER 5.....	32
5. REACTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION .....	32
5.1. INITIAL ACTIONS FOR COVID-19 CRISIS.....	32
5.2. SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTION: NGEU .....	34
5.3. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE .....	36
5.4. ACTORS OF COVID-19 CRISIS .....	39
CHAPTER 6.....	45
6. EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS ON THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION .....	45
6.1. ECONOMIC EFFECTS .....	45
6.2. INEQUALITIES IN THE EU .....	49
6.3. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE .....	52
CHAPTER 7.....	55
7. COMPARATIVE CASE ANALYSIS.....	55
7.1. MIGRATION CRISIS .....	55
7.2. A COMPARISON OF THE MIGRATION CRISIS AND THE COVID-19 CRISIS .....	57
CHAPTER 8.....	65
8. CONCLUSION .....	65
8.1. SUMMARY OF STUDY.....	65
8.2. CONCLUSION .....	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	71
APPENDICES.....	80
Appendix 1.....	80
Appendix 2.....	82
CURRICULUM VITAE .....	85

## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

<b>ACC</b>	: Additional Credit Claims
<b>BU</b>	: Banking Union
<b>CAP</b>	: Common Agricultural Policy
<b>CSPP</b>	: Corporate Sector Purchase Program
<b>CFSP</b>	: Common Foreign and Security Policy
<b>JHA</b>	: Justice and Home Affairs
<b>CPM</b>	: Civil Protection Mechanism
<b>EBCG</b>	: EU Border and Coast Guard
<b>EC</b>	: European Commission
<b>ECB</b>	: European Central Bank (ECB)
<b>ECDC</b>	: European Center for Disease Prevention and Control
<b>ECSC</b>	: The European Coal and Steel Community
<b>ECJ</b>	: European Court of Justice
<b>EEC</b>	: European Economic Community
<b>EIB</b>	: European Investment Bank
<b>EMS</b>	: European Monetary System
<b>EMU</b>	: Economy and Monetary Union
<b>EP</b>	: European Parliament
<b>ESFS</b>	: European System of Financial Supervision
<b>ESM</b>	: European Stability Mechanism
<b>ESRB</b>	: European Systemic Risk Board
<b>EUAA</b>	: EU Agency for Asylum
<b>EU</b>	: European Union
<b>EUROATOM</b>	: European Atomic Energy Community
<b>GDP</b>	: Gross Domestic Product Community
<b>HSC</b>	: Health Security Committee
<b>HTD</b>	: Health Treats Decision

<b>JHA</b>	: Justice and Home Affairs
<b>JPP</b>	: Joint Procurement Procedure
<b>NGEU</b>	: Next Generation EU
<b>OPEC</b>	: Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>PPE</b>	: Personal Protective Equipment
<b>QMV</b>	: Qualified Majority Voting
<b>SDS</b>	: Sustainable Development Strategy
<b>SEA</b>	: Single European Act
<b>SMEs</b>	: Small- And Medium-Sized Enterprises
<b>SURE</b>	: Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency
<b>TFEU</b>	: Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
<b>USA</b>	: United States of America
<b>WHO</b>	: World Health Organization

# LIST OF TABLES

	<b><u>PAGE NO</u></b>
<b>Table 4.1.</b> Emotional Status of European Citizens.....	29
<b>Table 5.1.</b> Next Generation EU Allocations on Programs.....	35
<b>Table 7.1.</b> Comparison of Migration Crisis and Covid-19 Crisis .....	59

# LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>PAGE NO</u>
<b>Figure 4.1.</b> Excess mortality (Reported Deaths – Expected Deaths) in Selected Countries in the EU.....	30
<b>Figure 4.2.</b> Case Fatality Rate of Covid-19 in Selected Countries in the EU.....	30
<b>Figure 6.1.</b> GDP and main components (output, expenditure, and income).....	46
<b>Figure 6.2.</b> Extra EU trade in goods, 2020 – 2021.....	47
<b>Figure 6.3.</b> Impact of COVID-19 on employment income - advanced estimates.....	48
<b>Figure 6.4.</b> Risk of layoff /reduced hours and risk of losing job by income group....	50
<b>Figure 7.1.</b> Theoretical Crisis Assessment Stages.....	60

# CHAPTER 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

"Extraordinary times require extraordinary action."

Christine Lagarde

Covid-19 has suddenly changed all lives and the balance around the world since December 2019. Although all countries, including the European Union, had a plan for diseases, they did not expect to encounter a global infectious disease on such a large scale. This sudden shock wave brought along many obligations, such as restriction of freedoms, prevention of travel, export, and wearing masks due to health concerns. The impact of covid-19 has determined the agenda of international politics by penetrating not only individual lives but also interstate relations. Policies formerly developed for oil have evolved into masks, gowns, and vaccine warfare in the 21st century. The European Union received its share from the catastrophic incident as member states suspended the EU rules, open-door policy, and import-export rules for a while with the effect of panic.

The European Union was established to solve the tension and crisis between France and Germany that emerged after the Second World War. It continued its way by renewing itself in every crisis. Some may consider that the Covid-19 crisis can contribute to the integration of the European Union in this context. In fact, while dealing with crises such as the economic and financial crisis, the refugee crisis, the Brexit crisis, and the increasing effect of right-wing parties in the new member countries, the covid-19 crisis has become a new challenge to the European Union to respond immediately because of health concerns of human lives. When the disease first spread, the EU's late response to emergency calls from Italy and Spain was perceived as harming integration and the spirit of solidarity of the EU. The study aims to reveal whether the EU emerged from this crisis by strengthening itself or it gets hard-to-repair wounds in integration. There will be an



analysis of measures taken by the EU while presenting the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on integration with theories.

This thesis evaluates COVID-19 within a threefold framework. The first aspect pertains to the problems caused by COVID-19 regarding capacity, coordination, and solidarity. The second aspect focuses on the reactions of the European Union to these problems. The third aspect examines the impact of COVID-19 on European integration. A comparison with the migration crisis will be made to assess this crisis effectively. The theoretical frameworks of liberal intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism will be employed to analyze this crisis. Taking a holistic approach, the history of the European Union will serve as an essential guide. COVID-19 will be extensively studied as a prominent case example throughout the thesis, while the migration crisis will be used as a comparative case study. The primary objective is to demonstrate the influence of the COVID-19 crisis on European integration.

According to the result of the study, distinct aspects differentiate COVID-19 from further crises, particularly in the initial measures taken during the early stages of the pandemic. Leveraging the experiences and mechanisms derived from previous crises, efforts were made to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and develop comprehensive recovery plans encompassing the EU's green and digital future. The motivation behind the EU's adoption of such comprehensive measures stems from the cost calculations of member states and the anticipation of the crisis having a more profound impact on economic, social, and political dimensions. In this context, COVID-19 has influenced European integration by highlighting the effectiveness of supranational institutions in areas primarily within the domain of nation-states, such as healthcare. As a result, the member states and institutions of the European Union have endeavored to continue their path without deviating from the overall goal of establishing peace and ensuring economic prosperity, which are fundamental and historical objectives of the European Union. On the other hand, it is seen that the migration crisis does not have the same effects because migration is a difficult area to make political decisions and its effects have not spread to all countries to the same degree as in covid-19 crisis. Thus, it is revealed that states and their interests are crucial in the decisions to be taken to overcome the crisis. But once the

decisions are taken, as in the case of covid-19, supranational institutions and actors play a major role in overcoming the crisis by increasing their effectiveness.

### **1.1. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Jack London wrote that while an infectious disease that emerged in 2013 destroyed humanity and civilization, those left behind became selfish to protect themselves, and humanity lost all the experience it had gained over centuries and returned to the beginning within days in the book “The Scarlet Plague”, a post-apocalyptic fiction genre written in 1912. Although it is a mystery for the author to tell us about our days with such an accurate prediction, the covid-19 epidemic that started in the last months of 2019 also transformed the whole world in a way that changed all habits within days like in the novel, canceled all flight plans for airlines and affected all systems in terms of logistics. In fact, this colossal event affected the free circulation of people, products, and ideas, which are the most familiar factors in the definition of globalism.

Although Covid-19 does not end the world like the plague in the novel, it has changed humanity individually and socially. At the beginning of the epidemic, we witnessed that states were also affected by this change, showed more authoritarian tendencies, went to various prohibitions and measures, and acted by national interests. Undoubtedly, interstate relations are much bigger than the reactions in the first panic, and important values such as the sense of unity, solidarity, and norms have been tried to be built for years. However, moments of crisis are important parameters that show the actors' behavior. Here is the initial starting point of this thesis to investigate the impact of covid-19 on the integration of the European Union while examining the initial reactions of the European Union in times of crisis in the context of covid-19 and to allow a comparison with the crisis experienced by the Union before. Does it open a window opportunity to integrate, or has it further dampened hopes for the integration of the European Union? Thus, this study examines the COVID-19 crisis as a case study and focuses on the measures taken by the European Union (EU) to protect the union in response to the crisis. The analysis primarily revolves around the EU's reactions during the initial months of the crisis.

Previous research and literature have identified numerous articles related to the COVID-19 crisis. Especially considering the size of the impact area of the covid-19 crisis, specific studies on these areas take up much space. However, it has been noted that there needs to be more comparative analysis in the literature regarding the overall impact of the crisis and the solutions implemented on integration. Specifically, there is a need for a comparative analysis that explores the interconnections between different problems arising from the COVID-19 crisis and other crises, thereby shedding light on their respective solutions. For this reason, an evaluation has been made together with the theories in the context of the historical framework.

## **1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS**

This study addresses the following main question and sub-questions regarding the problems revealed by the covid-19 crisis and the effects of covid-19 on the European Union to clarify the impact of the covid-19 crisis on European integration.

**Main Question:** How has covid-19 affected The European Union's integration?

**Main Hypothesis:** The more the European Union solves its problems in the crises, the stronger the European integration.

## **1.3. METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on comparative case analysis and qualitative research methods.

First, the research design is based on comparative case analysis because the COVID-19 crisis is considered a case in the study. The reactions of the European Union and states at the onset of the crisis, as well as the measures taken to resolve the problem and whether they were successful, are considered. The approach of both countries and the institutions of the European Union, even citizens, towards integration to overcome the crisis has been examined. One of the essential advantages of the case approach is that it allows for an in-depth examination of the case (Halperin and Heath 2012, 205). However, a comparative approach is needed better to understand the responses and solutions to the covid-19 crisis. Halperin and Heath (2012) state that “comparison can therefore serve a useful descriptive purpose and be used to map the extent to which different theories apply

(or can be replicated) across different contexts, and the extent to which different social and political phenomena will occur across different countries” (Halperin and Heath 2012, 204). Conducting a comparative case analysis with another crisis is a supported approach to facilitate understanding of both theory and applicable concepts and to facilitate concluding (Halperin and Heath 2012, 205).

Secondly, the other method of this study is qualitative research methods. Qualitative methods generally encompass non-numeric data and the process of collecting and analyzing these data (Lamont 2015, 78). Qualitative methods, generally depend on inductive reasoning, are typically employed to delve into the in-depth analysis of a specific region, country, phenomenon, event, or actor in order to comprehend the world we live in and grasp the processes shaping international politics (Lamont 2015, 78).

This study is conducted via a variety of resources. The researcher considers several primary documents such as official reports, press corners, policy papers, speeches, declarations, and even tweets as well as secondary resources such as academic books, articles, and newspapers about the covid-19 crisis. In addition, the historical development of the European Union and its experiences with other crises have been examined in these sources. Additionally, a limited amount of secondary data analysis has been conducted in this research. Particularly, while investigating the effects of covid-19, data prepared by others have been employed. Due to the limitations posed by the researcher's lack of full familiarity with the data, there are disadvantages associated with the use of secondary data analysis, which is widely employed in social sciences based on time and cost efficiency (Bryman 2012, 312-315). Therefore, a limited amount of secondary data has been utilized.

#### **1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

One of the most significant limitations of the study is the challenge of disentangling the problems caused by the COVID-19 crisis and their impact on integration. This is because both the problems and the negative or positive effects are intertwined and cannot be considered separately. For instance, the economic impact of COVID-19 has stemmed from capacity and coordination issues. Actions taken by institutions to enhance economic and financial capacity involve implementing recovery

plans and funds. However, while increasing capacity, it is essential to ensure the distribution of resources and coordination. Otherwise, the belief in solidarity among states or citizens will weaken.

Another study constraint is the extensive and detailed history of European integration, which prevented an in-depth historical analysis. Additionally, it has been observed that crises hold a significant place in the history of the European Union, and therefore, not all crises could be included in the scope. As a comparison, the migration crisis is discussed. Since the main study is covid-19, although the migration crisis is not handled as detailed as the covid-19 crisis, it has been tried to be given in outline to understand the COVID-19 crisis better and enable a comparison. In other words, this study will not delve into a detailed analysis of the crises experienced by Europe.

Additionally, to better understand actors' behavior during the crisis, the study focused on the initial moments of the coronavirus crisis. A specific time frame, the first months of the crisis, has been set to analyze the crisis itself and the responses during that period. Hence, this study will not include a long-term analysis starting from the beginning of the covid-19 crisis.

Moreover, the study seeks evidence as to whether Covid 19 has affected European Integration. Therefore, it evaluates the measures taken by member states and European institutions in the light of liberal intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism theories within the framework of European Integration. Despite all these limitations, it is anticipated that this study will provide a general framework for measuring the impact of COVID-19 on integration and contribute to the literature through comparative analysis.

## **1.5. OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS**

This study consists of 8 chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction, which includes the study's rationale, research question and sub-questions, methodology, limitations, and an outline of the chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on providing a historical framework by discussing European Union integration. It covers establishing the European Union, strengthening integration, and critical milestones such as the European Single Act and the Maastricht Treaty. It also briefly outlines the crises experienced in the 2000s. Chapter 3

introduces the two theories, neo-functionalism, and liberal intergovernmentalism, and explains how these theories approach crises.

The following three chapters are dedicated to analyzing the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 4 explores the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis and the challenges it brought. It sheds light on the capacity, coordination, and solidarity issues Europe faces. Chapter 5 focuses on the European Union's reactions to the crisis. It discusses the initial actions, highlights the Next Generation EU (NGEU) as an innovative tool and the negotiations surrounding it, and delves into the roles of key actors. Chapter 6 examines the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 and highlights the risk of widening inequalities among countries. It also explores the effects on the institutional structure.

Chapter 7 analyzes the migration crisis and evaluates the causes of the crisis, their challenges, the steps taken by the EU, and their impact on integration. Also, it presents a comprehensive comparative case analysis of COVID-19 and the migration crisis on integration. Chapter 8 provides a summary of the study and a conclusion. It also suggests the path that the European Union should follow both in solving the migration crisis and future crises.

# CHAPTER 2

## 2. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION HISTORY

The world and especially Europe needed to establish and maintain peace again when World War II was over in 1945. It was also necessary to rebuild destroyed economies, structures, buildings, and hopes. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), established as an idea in 1951 by the Treaty of Paris, changed and transformed over time. Firstly, it turned into the European Economic Community (EEC) for economic integration in 1957 with the Treaty of Rome, then the European Community (EC) in 1967 with the Merger Treaty, and finally, the European Union (EU) was established with Maastricht Treaty. This long and grueling road is the story of the existence, survival, and integration of the European Union, and it is a journey that continues with its ups and downs. Although academics believe that integration is a social and political process, different dimensions of integration are mentioned according to approaches and theories, and the outputs of the process with governance experience became more important than the process phase of integration after the 1980s (Wiener and Diez 2009, 3).

European integration is the collective effort and collaboration of states to act together in political, economic, and social fields. Integration deepens through the establishment of a common market, free movement of capital and individuals, and economic and political cooperation. The history of the European Union is a significant indicator of European Union integration; therefore, it has been included in this study to understand integration. It is of interest to determine both the contribution of Covid-19 to the historical process and the extent to which states have enhanced integration by collaborating in political, economic, and social fields. The contribution of the lessons learned and earned in the history of integration, which develops step by step, will be seen in coping with the crisis. Thus, it is necessary to touch on the historical process to understand the transformation of the European Union.

## **2.1. THE RISE OF THE EU FROM THE ASHES: BETWEEN 1950s-1980s**

Historically, the 1950s and 60s passed with the establishment of institutions and healing of the wounds of World War II. Besides, it brought relief with the increase in economic welfare. Europeans began to live in a better position compared to the past while people's lifestyles were evolving towards using electrical appliances and refrigerators and heating with natural gas; unemployment was decreasing, and people were starting to have time to acquire new hobbies and life expectancy was getting longer (Eichengreen 2007, 1). Not only the order in the world, and the relations between countries changed. The recovery process also began worldwide, and the number and effectiveness of international organizations increased when World War II ended. In the period from 1945 to 1960, the number of international organizations augmented from 832 to 1.255 (Patel 2020, 15) while international organizations became the most important actors in creating cooperation between countries in the post-war era. Patel (2020) describes today's European Union as one of many international organizations in the concept of "one of many" (Patel 2020, 14).

At the same time, it differs from other international organizations at certain points and has a distinctive and complex structure that lies in the founding story of the European Union. The four important driving forces that brought the European Union to its current position and ensured its establishment, and the sui generis structure of the EU are distinguishes it from other international institutions (Loth 2015). A large number of official and unofficial representatives from 28 European countries gathered to talk about the future of Europe at the Hague Congress in 1948 to evaluate four driving forces (Loth 2015, 13). These were to ensure peace on the continent, solve the German problem, shape the economy and industry, and maintain the balance between the superpowers, the United States (US) and Soviet Russia (Loth 2015, 1-3). Thus, the EU was designed as "a new structure in Europe based on peace between nations, political cooperation, economic recovery and a growth in international trade" (Watts 2008, 10). Undoubtedly, establishing peace and stability in Europe was very significant for developing the continent and improving living conditions. It is also obvious that without economic development, success cannot be achieved in maintaining peace (Patel 2020, 85), and without peace, economic development will only serve as an engine in new wars for the continent (Watts



2008, 3). Additionally, the establishment of NATO for the security and Council of Europe “as a forum for parliamentary opinion” (Watts 2008, 11) in 1949 is the positive contribution of those periods to peace until today and reflects the need for peace.

The idea of uniting France and Germany under a joint supreme authority, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), was put forward by the founding name of the European Union, Jean Monnet, while it was adopted and proposed by the French foreign minister Robert Schuman (Patel 2020). So, this cooperation between France and Germany in coal and steel will also contribute to reducing the risk of war between the two states (Patel 2020, 58). Although this idea caused fierce debates, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established with the Paris Agreement signed in 1951 after hard persuasion efforts between six European states, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Belgium (McCormick 2015, 85).

Jean Monnet evaluated the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community as the first step and adopted that the cooperation would reflect on other economic and political fields in time, lead to new cooperation and solution ways which increase the commitment to the process, and this would be reinforced with the outputs obtained from the process (McCormick 2015, 18). The most important thing that distinguishes and differentiates the European Union from others is that states intentionally give their power as supranational authority to the European Union and its institutions (Watts 2008, x). In fact, what is still spoken and discussed today is the extent to which states want to delegate their powers or competencies to the European Union.

As a next step, in 1957, the European Economic Community, which aimed to create a common market where people, capital, goods, and services could move freely, and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) were established together with the Treaty of Rome (McCormick 2015, 89). The first three articles of the Treaty of Rome contain the economic goals of the community and what needs to be done to achieve these goals. Indeed, economic integration is the whole of activities done to realize these items, as mentioned in Article 2:

“The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of Member States, to promote throughout the Community a harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increase in stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of living and closer relations between the States belonging to it” (Rome Treaty 1957, Article 2).

The European Economic Community needed to provide a peaceful environment, establish institutions, and have a common market. It was understood that with the cooperation of France and Germany in one area, collaboration began to occur in other areas as well, and thus the establishment of a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 1962 and the abolition of customs duties among the member states in 1968 contributed to the development of the common market (Watts 2008, 22). Therefore, the Fusion (Merger) Treaty signed in 1965, three influential organizations, the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Atomic Energy Community, European Economic Community, which formed the basis of the European Union, merged in 1967 under a single entity which was named European Community (EC) (Watts 2008, 22). Although the EC made progress in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were still shortcomings in transportation and social policy issues, but still, the monetary and political union started to be talked about in this period (Watts 2008, 22).

Nevertheless, these times were when the European countries developed economically, insomuch that there is a term used for these periods, “the trente glorieuses” (Patel 2020, 86). Eichengreen (2008) indicates that there was an economic boom and defines these periods as the “golden age” (Eichengreen 2008, 15) by showing that Western Europe’s GDP grew more than twice, from 2 percent to 5 percent annually, between 1950 and 1973 and could not grow that much even in the following years, at the same time, the peripheral European countries such as Greece, Spain, Turkey, which are relatively poorer than Europe, also grew similarly while the acceleration in Western Europe is even faster than the US (Eichengreen 2008, 15-18). With economic relief among people, the gap between the countries decreased, and the neighboring countries converged economically (Patel 2020, 86).

Nevertheless, although essential institutions were established and merger was achieved between significant institutions in these years, it has not been successful enough

to deepen the integration in the establishment of supranational structures, so the integration could not deepen, and a period of stagnation was experienced (Kaya et al. 2020, 7). In other words, critical economic developments took place in this period, and the crises shaped and slowed down this process. For example, the empty chair crisis led by French President Charles De Gaulle's withdrawal from the decision-making mechanisms to reject supranational evolution in the EC in 1965 (Nugent 2017, 1). Also, the economic slowdown following the 1973 oil crisis and the political stagnation in the late 1970s and early 1980s, known as "Eurosclerosis" which refers to the slowdown in decision-making mechanisms, particularly in requiring unanimity in making decisions to develop the internal market (Nugent 2017, 1), led to a significant crisis that caused the European Union to deviate from its expansion and deepening goals.

## **2.2. DEEPENING INTEGRATION: SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT AND MAASTRICHT**

Europe needed to be a unit on an issue after a stagnant period, and the primary target was to strengthen the single market. The Single European Act (SEA) signed in 1986 was seen as an important step that profoundly contributed to the internal market and institution structure for integration after the Treaty of Rome (Kaya et al. 2020, 7; Troitino 2013, x). During the European Commission presidency of the EC, Jacques Delors carried the community to an important stage by addressing technical, physical, and fiscal problems by accomplishing reform movements, including the completion of the European single market, so the SEA was seen as an important milestone carrying the European Union to a monetary and economic union while opening the way to Maastricht Treaty (Watts 2008, 35; Patel 2020, 97). The European Single Act brought many innovations at the point of both providing standards and acting in harmony within the community on many issues, from banking to the legal framework for businesses, to taxes, and also, these reforms resulted in the widening of the majority voting system in many topics, even including social policy and promoting to the development of a cooperation mechanism that made it easier to make decisions, which are significant success points for the EU and facilitated many future processes. (Watts 2008, 36-37).

Furthermore, the Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992, is a reform treaty for the integration of the European Union beyond the treaty establishing the EU. McGiffen (2006) defends that the Maastricht Treaty has a transformational effect on European Union integration by making 4 different things (McGiffen 2006, 4-6). These are: it is the enlargement of the competence of the European Union institutions in new areas, determining the goals for the union and drawing a map to achieve these goals, and settling what will be done for the transition to the single currency within a plan and creating the three-pillar system (McGiffen 2006, 4-5, McCormick 2015, 160).

Firstly, the three-pillar structure enabled the EU to operate in different pillars: the European Community, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). While the three-pillar structure ensured the preservation and development of the supranational characteristics of the European Union in matters related to the European Community, it allowed decision-making on CFSP and JHA issues by an intergovernmental method (McCormick 2015, 163). The indicators show that CFSP and JHA issues require more intergovernmental sensitivity because “they cannot be used as a basis for Directives and Regulations (EC laws), they are conducted by national governments through the Council of Ministers and the European Council, they give no formal powers to the supranational institutions – the Commission, EP and European Court of Justice (ECJ)” (McGiffen 2006, 9).

Fundamentally, this shows that just as the European Community tried to strike a balance between liberalism and protectionism while supporting competition and the free market to establish the internal market, it also tried to find a balance between regulations and central planning, in the same way, it is trying to find a balance between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism and it shows that the European Community or Europe Union whatever the name of it, instead of basing it on a model, it takes into account the changing balance and challenges (Patel 2020, 114).

Secondly, even if the three-pillar system was removed by Lisbon Treaty later, the institutions, especially with a supranational character, both gained power and had the opportunity to expand their jurisdictions. For example, in favor of the three-pillar system, the European Parliament (EP) increased its competence areas against the Council of the European Union because it contributed to the establishment of a structure for cooperation

on education, social policies, consumer issues, migration, and asylum and played an important role in the development of regional funds, at the same time, it also allowed the emergence of the concept of European citizenship (McCormick 2015, 121-123). However, Piris (2010) supports that although all fields of activity are explained in the new Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), creating a common foreign and security policy is different from other fields, thus it is generally accepted that the institutional features that described the second pillar are preserved mainly by Maastricht Treaty (Piris 2010, 66).

Thirdly, the European Union determined the rules and criteria to be followed with the Maastricht Treaty since it was growing, and it was time to set a standard among the member states. The EU had begun to expand to include some countries, but the great enlargement wave occurred after the 1990s. Denmark, Great Britain, and Ireland had already joined the European Community in 1973, Greece in 1981, Portugal and Spain in 1989. The 1990s were noteworthy for the European Union with the effect of a switch in world politics because of demolishing the Berlin Wall and the ending of the Cold War, which caused many independent states, where identities were reshaped, to emerge in Eastern Europe (Kaya et al. 2020, 9). As a result of this political environment, many countries lined up to join the community that became the European Union with the Maastricht Treaty signed in 1992 (Watts 2008, 49). In addition, the European Union, after the Maastricht Treaty, created a mechanism determining the conditions under which Central and Eastern European countries will become members of the EU, and according to these Copenhagen Criteria, the applicant countries must be fully democratic, have a functioning market economy and be willing to adopt the *acquis communautaire* (Watts 2008, 241; McCormick 2015, 125). After that, the EU expanded in 1995, including Austria, Finland, and Sweden, while the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia joined the EU in 2004; the penultimate enlargements were Bulgaria, and Romania in 2007 and lastly in 2013 Croatia enlargements created the current map of the European Union. The countries that joined the European Union or the countries that want to join should meet in common interests, even if they have different beliefs about the future of the European Union; moreover, the European Union can progress as long as it serves countries' national interests, and this

contributes to the European Union's taking new initiatives and moving forward (Watts 2008, 242).

Lastly, Maastricht Treaty created a single currency for Europeans, Euro. Although a common market was established, a common currency was required to strengthen the internal market, and a higher authority was needed to regulate it, and thus the European Central Bank (ECB) and a common European central bank system were established with the primary objective of ensuring price stability (European Central Bank 2017). Establishing a common Economy and Monetary Union (EMU) or using a common currency is not a new issue for the European Community. In the light of the Werner Report in 1971, Jack Delors report in 1989, the European Community discussed these issues and even the European Monetary System (EMS) was established (Hix 2005, 313). However, the use of a single currency could be implemented with the Maastricht Treaty according to the four convergence criteria that the members of the EMU should comply with (Hix 2005, 315). These convergence criteria are “price stability, sound and sustainable public finances, the durability of convergence, and exchange rate stability” (European Commission, 1991).

Thus, states in the eurozone will try to achieve the same economic standard. For states that follow Keynesian policies, the SEA and monetary union are the social and political processes that lead to internal policy change through macroeconomic policies (Bickerton 2012, 134). In summary, the Maastricht Treaty emerged as a reform agreement that realized the need for innovation in the changing world order with the end of the Cold War after the 1990s and wanted to connect both Germany and other countries to integration while deepening the integration (Troitino 2013, 175).

### **2.3. CENTURY OF CRISES FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION**

It is encountered with an EU that has come a long way in terms of economic union and has a common market and currency in the 2000s. The remaining goal is to establish the EU as a political union. Kaya et al. (2020) state that “while entering the 2000s, the European Union has become a supranational union that has a single market and currency and is open to cooperation in the political field” (Kaya et al. 2020, 9). Due to this goal, the Lisbon Treaty was prepared and presented as a constitution. Undoubtedly, shaping

the European Union around a constitution would be a promising political movement for federalists. However, with the referendums held in 2005, the founding members of the EU, two influential powers, France and the Netherlands, rejected the constitution irreversibly (McCormick 2015, 145). Despite factors related to domestic politics and European circumstances, such as difficulties in adequately conveying the contents of the constitution to the citizens, the referendums held in France and the Netherlands resulted in negative votes (Piris 2010, 31). This outcome revealed that the European Union was not yet prepared for a constitution and, as Piris (2010) suggests, had a profound "political earthquake" effect (Piris 2010, 24).

It should be noted that Denmark also had reservations during the Maastricht Treaty, but this time the heads of state or government predicted that the crisis would deepen with the disintegration of the sense of confidence in the union, and they decided to prepare a new treaty in order to strengthen the union and democratize the decision-making processes (Piris 2010, 25). As a result, the Lisbon Treaty was signed in 2007. In other words, by getting rid of a crisis and evolving, the EU has drawn a new path for itself with the instinct to survive. Just as Jean Monnet declared in his memoirs that "the EU was established through crises and that the result would be the sum of these crises" (Monnet 1978; as cited in McCormick 2015, 146).

Moreover, the 2000s and 2010s were years of testing for the EU in terms of crises. First of all, the attack of Al-Qaeda on the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001, changed the perception of security in America and the whole world. Secondly, the subsequent Greek debt crisis, especially in the southern European countries, and the EU's reactions to this issue occupied the union's agenda for a long time. While the effects of the global crisis, which started in the United States of America (USA) in 2008, penetrated Europe, especially Greece, Spain, and Portugal, it also revealed the north-south divide within the union, deepening the socio-economic and political borders (Kaya et al. 2020, 13). The event did not only continue in the economic dimension but also brought along the discussions on the separation of the community members in the context of the north-south, east-west, and lender-debtor countries. This crisis led to both sides blaming each other, resulting in a loss of solidarity (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2015, 11). Although all European Union institutions and member states may try to portray bailout programs and

austerity measures as voluntary actions, they are the result of classic negotiations based on a cost-benefit analysis for each country, and this bargaining process has become an economic necessity for all countries involved (Grimmel 2021, 253). They had to take action because of mutual economic necessity. Thus, country representatives decided to establish and improve European institutions and resources to find a quick solution to the crisis, and despite some difficulties, they managed to rescue the euro (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2015, 18).

The European Union has faced many crises, even between two systemic problems, the Euro crisis, and the covid-19 crisis (Matthijs 2020, 1127). Along with the economic crisis, one of the most important crises affecting the European Union has been the migration crisis that accelerated after the 2010s. Many people left their homeland due to wars and the instability in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Nugent 2007, 6-7). The aspects that affect European integration are the deterioration of the Schengen system (Matthijs 2020, 1127), and the political problems are the divergence of the demands and disagreement of the member states in the steps to be taken regarding migration (Nugent 2007, 7). Also, the immigration problem caused the spread of nationalism and populism, as well as a critical attitude towards the European Union, across Europe, causing extreme Euroscepticism in countries such as Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, and England, and it was a policy that also helped right-wing leaders (Nugent 2017,7). Immigration has a quick response in domestic politics, and the instrumentalization of migration has affected the hardening of the union members' attitudes. There were already conflicts on democratic issues with the new member states like Poland and Hungary (Matthijs 2020, 1127).

Moreover, Britain, which has never been fully integrated into the union since 1973, officially left the EU on 1 February 2020 and stated that it would not act together to deal with the problems and would not share a common destiny. Although it is not the founding country of the Union, Brexit has dimmed the hopes of integration and caused Euroscepticism (Dinan 2018, 25). The European Union was confronted with political challenges and the possibility that there may be countries such as England. While these problems persist, Russia's invasion of Crimea reminded the EU that it is also facing the danger of Russia expanding its border (Matthijs 2020, 1127).



Overall, especially after the 2010s, it has been the worst years for the European Union in terms of shocks and crises (Dinan 2018,25). Unfortunately, the world has been shaken by a global pandemic that spread all over the world while the EU was dealing with all these crises and problems. The EU has had to make quick decisions that determine the member countries' public health and capacity to combat the illness at the same time it should be in solidarity. Covid-19 has entered our lives with a huge shock wave that will change not only individuals' daily lives but also states' functioning. Among all these crises, the EU tries to take measures against covid-19 and gives a collective response to all.

# CHAPTER 3

## 3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The European integration has a vast literature both in terms of its historical context and theoretical framework. According to Wiener and Diez (2009), we need integration theories to understand and conceptualize integration for three reasons 1) help us to explain processes and outcomes of integration 2) provide detailed knowledge about the EU's institutions, and 3) support the empirical knowledge (Wiener and Diez 2009, 4). So, this study will utilize the theoretical framework of neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism. However, when examining the issue, firstly, we should take into consideration that

“The European institutional architecture can be viewed as being halfway between an association of sovereign states (like the United Nations) and a politically integrated federation (like the United States). In this original construction, competences on several matters (such as economic, political, social and health issues) are shared at the European level, but also at the national and local levels, in more complex ways than in fully integrated federations” (Barbier-Gauchard et al. 2021, 321).

Although the European Union (EU) exhibits features resembling federalism, such as the sharing of competences, collective decision-making, the primacy of law, and the establishment of a common market and free movement, it is ultimately an international organization in which member states have a say.

The second aspect we need to deliberate on is that European integration is a process that contains the collective effort of member states to work together in economic, political, social, and legal terms to establish peace and promote economic development, stability, and welfare. The European Union stands as the most prominent example of European integration. The EU fosters economic integration among member states and encompasses policies such as free movement, a common market, a common currency, and a central bank. As a broad definition, integration is “the process whereby political

actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states” (Haas 1958, as cited in Wiener and Diez 2009, 2).

### **3.1. NEO-FUNCTIONALISM**

Neo-functionalism is shaped around the “Monnet method” (Rosamond 2000, 50), but the theoretical framework was defined by Ernst Haas’ studies (Haas 1968; Haas, 1970). In neo-functionalism theory, there will be broad governance if states agree in an area in a regional or “political community” (Haas 1970, 630). Then, forms follow the functions with path dependency and spillovers (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1115; Schimmelfennig 2018, 973). Based on Haas' thoughts, Rosamond explains that spillover, which is the most crucial phenomenon for neo-functionalism, is a process that starts in one area successfully and will continue beyond those areas via actors and organizations (Rosamond 2000, 60; Rosamond 2005, 244-245). Spillover effects can be in three different forms respectively 1) functional spillover “low politics' areas were seen as having the potential for 'spilling over' into other policy areas, at first to those closely related to market policy, but ultimately beyond” 2) political spillover is that “actors, who had shifted their loyalties and redefined their identities, to actively demand further integration” 3) cultivated spillover depends on the “actors responsible for governance on the supranational level (in the EU case, above all the European Commission) were considered to push (or 'cultivate') integration” (Wiener and Diez 2009, 8). For example, coal and steel cooperation began as economic cooperation, then continued with political implementations, led the way for integration, and pushed the actors and states to be in a circle with mutual ideas. During this time, the EU evolved into a political union with a “treaty establishing an EU Constitution” (Hix 2005, 34), a common bank, and a currency.

According to the neofunctionalism, member states gradually transfer their powers to the European Union, and as an incremental process, economic interest groups and supranational institutions, driven by the increasing impact of functionalism in other policy areas, demand further integration (Vilpišauskas 2013, 364). Furthermore, while national states give more autonomy to non-state actors or supranational institutions, they will

make concessions from their sovereignty and their role as gatekeeping (Rosamond 2000, 56). For instance, the European Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) can be important institutions for neo-functionalism because they focus on more technocratic and functional issues.

However, there are many crises in the international system, although neo-functionalism offers an “optimistic” view (Schimmelfennig 2018, 986). How does neo-functionalism respond to crises, and how does it understand them? In situations where authority decreases and the effect of joint decision-making mechanisms decreases, the parties may show a spill-back effect in the experienced negativities and break away from their common goals and commitments (Schmitter, 1970, 840 - 845). Besides, Hooghe and Marks (2019) state that “Neofunctionalism expects the path of integration to be jagged. Crises may delay or even retard integration, but the guiding assumption is that, over time, policy spillover and supranational activism will produce an upward trend” (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1115).

In times of crisis, established institutions are called upon to take over other areas to fight crises (Schmitter 1970, 46). Schimmelfennig (2018) thinks that crises are considered a part of the integration dynamic and are produced internally during integration, also governments accept further integration in crisis because of high sunk cost and existing cost while important supranational actors such as the ECB and the Court of Justice can benefit from more integration (Schimmelfennig 2018, 974). Also, neo-functionalism comprehends that crises will emerge in interconnected policy areas. The resolution of these crises will be demanded by actors, states, and interest groups, increasing integration demands. In this way, crises can contribute to the process of integration.

Secondly, according to Lefkofridi and Schmitter (2015), during crises, states try to find solutions by converging on the lowest common denominator and continue with the solutions they have found (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2015, 18). When new crises arise due to these deficiencies, they find partial solutions again. The authors explain this situation with the concept of "failing forward" (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2015). The principle of failing forward suggests that lessons should be learned from failures in the process and that this approach can achieve integration. On the other hand, neo-

functionalism sees failures as obstacles to integration. However, it also anticipates that failures can promote further collaboration and advance integration, which is in line with the principle of failing forward.

### **3.2. LIBERAL INTERGOVERNMENTALISM**

Liberal intergovernmentalism offers an analysis between the liberal theory of national preference and an intergovernmental approach to strategic bargaining between the states with the effect of supranational institutions (Moravcsik, 1993; Rosamond, 2000, 136). According to liberal intergovernmentalism, the integration process focuses on the centrality of states and their role in decision-making, perceiving integration as a zero-sum game where each country bargains and negotiates to achieve its objectives and, therefore, liberal intergovernmentalism views integration is limited due to the constraints of national sovereignty, as integration primarily occurs within the realms of national sovereignty (Sharma 2021,133).

Besides, Moravcsik, the popular interpreter of liberal intergovernmentalism, claims that national states consider their national preferences, which are domestically defined in the process of supply and demand (Moravcsik 1993, 481). Liberal intergovernmentalism argues that nations generally act based on economic interests during the international bargaining process by local preferences and leaders (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1116). Thus, in the first part of liberal intergovernmentalism, national states consider their citizens' and domestic actors' preferences while making decisions on international issues. The second part is that the bargaining process looks like inter-state negotiations based on asymmetrical interdependence between member states. It means that the state in the best condition to make decisions also needs the least agreement (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009, 71).

Lastly, according to liberal intergovernmentalism, states follow their aim in anarchy, but they are aware of the entity of international institutions; they don't deny them like realists (Rosamond, 2000, 142). According to liberal intergovernmentalism, institutions are necessary for efficiency, and the authority will be designated or pooled by states because national states encounter their interest to comply with the deal (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1116).

Schimmelfennig (2015) believes that even if liberal intergovernmentalism provides an instant view of the bargaining process and it falls short in offering specific propositions to explain the crisis, it still serves as a fundamental approach in explaining major steps in crisis as seen in the euro crisis (Schimmelfennig 2015, 178-179). Liberal intergovernmentalism explains national preferences that arise based on parameters like interdependence and the fiscal position of member countries, using the analogy of the “chicken game” and crisis solution aligned with the interests of the advantaged side based on asymmetric relations can be reached (Schimmelfennig 2015, 179). It argues that crises influence asymmetric relationships and affect some groups and countries more (Schimmelfennig, 2018, 973).

In a nutshell, neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism, which can be considered as its opposite in decision-making processes. The biggest difference between neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism is “whereas neo-functionalism explains integration as the outcome of cooperation and competition among societal actors, intergovernmentalism explains integration as the outcome of cooperation and competition among national governments” (Hooghe and Marks, 2019, 1115). Furthermore, liberal intergovernmentalism represents the solutions found by states in the short term, while neo-functionalism contributes to integration through the accumulation of solutions found in response to recurring crises (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2015, 18). These two theories are not separate but work together, albeit at different speeds while liberal intergovernmentalism focuses on short-term outcomes, neo-functionalism provides a long-term perspective (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2015, 18).

In conclusion, neo-functionalism views crises as opportunities to increase integration and focuses on the spillover effects spreading to other areas and the desires for integration from different interest groups and actors. On the other hand, liberal intergovernmentalism sees crises as challenges to be overcome and focuses on the pragmatic approaches of states in the bargaining stage, where the outcome is crucial (Sharma 2021). And lastly, there is a comprehension in the literature “the crises of the past decade have made the EU more ‘inter-governmental’ in nature but with a more robust implementation role for the EU’s supranational institutions” (Matthijs 2020, 1127).

# CHAPTER 4

## 4. COVID-19 CRISIS

### 4.1. BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The contagious disease Covid -19, which started to spread in Wuhan, China in December 2019, made remarkable changes in crisis management of national states and supranational and international organizations. The first covid-19 case began to be seen in Europe on 24 January 2020, while China had already reported the first case on 31 December 2019 (European Commission 2022b). In the last months of 2019, videos about people who died in China began to circulate on social media; there was also news that Chinese doctors were threatened (Hegarty 2020). It was thought that the virus, which started to spread from a public market in China, would be regionally effective and limited in China. However, unlike the Sars and Ebola epidemics, Covid-19 spreads all over the world rapidly, firstly in other Asian countries and then in the USA and Europe. In an age where globalization was so effective, no one thought that the mobility of people and goods would be restricted suddenly. The world had experienced major epidemics like smallpox, plague, influenza, and cholera before, but the world was not such a vibrant place in those times.

When covid-19 started to spread worldwide at the beginning of 2020, no one had thought that this disease would spread to such an extent that countries closed their borders, restricted people to stay at home, closed schools and workplaces, or even declared a state of emergency. In the 21st century, while individuals face an unfamiliar event, states have had to take strict measures at a level they have never shown before. The coronavirus has affected each country differently, and measures for the protection of public health were implemented at different levels in each state, even within the European Union. According to Sapir (2020), the strictness of the containment measures and the way regional and local authorities dealing with the virus, the economic structure of the country and its areas of

economic activity, and the quality of governance are important factors for these differences (Sapir 2020, 5-6). Although practices differ in each country for many reasons, citizens feel the same emotions in the face of losing loved ones: despair and uncertainty. Citizens of the European Union wanted states and the European Union to take urgent measures. On the one hand, national states have been criticized for not taking measures or for not taking enough measures; on the other hand, surprisingly, criticism of the measures taken has increased in others because of concerns arising from restrictions on personal freedoms. Because many issues, such as mask-wearing obligations, school and workplace closures, travel and quarantine restrictions, and testing requirements, started to be discussed and even implemented with little time to discuss.

Unfortunately, the epidemic spread so hastily that no continent or country was unaffected. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared covid-19, which is seen in more than 100 countries, a pandemic. It spreads so quickly and although it has subsided even in 2023, it somehow continues in the shadow of the data. Today, the cumulative number of confirmed cases reported to the World Health Organization is 767.364.883, deaths are 6.938.353, and 13.355.264.024 vaccine doses have been implemented as of 22 May 2023 (WHO, 2023).

#### **4.2. THE CHALLENGES REVEALED BY COVID-19**

The COVID-19 crisis has had various impacts on European integration in different areas. The effects of COVID-19 have been observed in health policies, border controls, freedom of movement, economic and social domains, and EU institutions. As capacity, coordination, and solidarity issues in these areas have been addressed, efforts have been made to mitigate the negative repercussions and overcome the crisis. Therefore, this study will focus on three main aspects of the covid-19 crisis: 1) identifying the fundamental challenges, 2) exploring the European Union's attempts to find solutions to these challenges, and 3) assessing the effects of the crisis in various areas on European integration. This section will evaluate the challenges that arise first in the context of capacity, coordination, and solidarity. Hence, the next section will delve into the European Union's initial reactions since the crisis's onset. The subsequent chapter will examine the effects of covid-19 on European integration.



In the middle of March 2020, there was hopelessness in European countries and all over the world. The reason for this despair is that covid-19 reveals three facts at the beginning of the covid-19 crisis. First, it reveals the capacity and coordination inadequacy of each country and the European Union separately. This lack of capacity was most simply demonstrated by the inadequacies in hospital capacity based on emergency health needs such as lack of physical equipment and personnel in case of emergency, and collective health needs. In March 2020, Italy, France, and Spain were severely affected by the epidemic because of increased bed occupancy rates in hospitals, difficulties in the supply of masks, personnel, and equipment, a kind of chaos in border controls, and withdrawal of people from the streets of Europe (Rakt and Christl 2020; Akdogan et. al, 2020).

Along with these inadequacies, criticism against the European Union began. Italy received the first blow from covid-19 in the European Union. According to Maurizio Massari, Italian permanent representative to the European Union, this crisis is not a national crisis, although the Italian government took various measures to contain the virus, including 11 municipalities on lockdown and declaring a state of emergency for six months and many public activities, school education, sports events, funerals, and weddings were postponed or suspended, on the contrary, it is a European crisis that the European Union institutions should take action by giving a global response, hence European Civil Protection Mechanism should be activated (Rakt and Christl 2020).

In addition, it has been seen that the lockdown policies of the countries alone are not sufficient, and the inability to export technical equipment for cardiopulmonary resuscitation from Germany to countries like Italy that need it most or the inability to export complementary equipment (such as masks and gloves) from Eastern European countries, ahead in textile, to other member states (Barbier-Gauchard et al. 2021, 322). At this stage, it was seen that the European institutions failed to tap into the potential complementarities of the member states and did not draw a broad framework to coordinate the capabilities of member states (Barbier-Gauchard et al. 2021, 322). While there was competition between countries in accessing vital products such as masks and medical equipment, sharing or coordinating the distribution of resources between countries became difficult because all countries needed them at the same time. Even if

the European Commission implemented an export ban and engaged in joint public procurement with member states to not experience the deficiency of medical equipment and protective gear across the European Union (Sharma 2021, 132), instead of coordination and solidarity, there were disjoint national acts because Germany, France, and the Czech Republic have announced bans on exports of protective gear to prevent domestic shortages (Sharma 2021, 132; Guarascio and Blenkinsop 2020;). Later the Commission followed a similar approach in vaccine procurement, indicating a common approach with states on matters that fall under their sovereignty, such as vaccination and healthcare services (Sharma 2021, 132).

The second fact that revealed despair is the different practices in the measures taken and lockdown policies to handle the crisis due to insufficient capacity and coordination. The national measures - closing borders, imposing travel restrictions, flight bans, and increasing border controls - emerged as a containment policy at the beginning of the crisis (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer 2021, 33). The European Union was delayed in producing a common policy for a while when covid-19 started to appear in Europe in March 2020, and during this time, common policies such as open border and free movement of products of the EU were punctured by the prevailing sense of panic (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer 2021, 33). In mid-March, some countries like Poland, Austria, and Slovenia determined to close their borders with Italy, and while this meant the complete suspension of the Schengen agreement, it was also an indication of the lack of coordination between member states and the European identity based on the basic assumption that goods and people could move freely (Barbier-Gauchard et al. 2021, 322). Regarding international relations and the functioning of supranational entities, it is noteworthy that member states deviated from or suspended the implementation of common policies and practices of the European Union or international authorities to safeguard public health. This occurred until the European Union adopted unified measures for the well-being of all citizens within the union. The European Commission issued a press release on 11 June 2020 on this matter and recommended that:






















“...to lift internal border controls by 15 June 2020 and to prolong the temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU until 30 June 2020; and sets out an approach to progressively lifting the restriction afterwards” (European Commission, 2020b).

However, states also decided to open their borders considering national pandemic situations before the deadline set by the European Union, for example, Italy's reopening of its borders with France on June 3, 2020 (Barbier-Gauchard et al. 2021, 322).

Thirdly, hope and solidarity diminished because of insufficiency of capacity and coordination, the competition between states, and expanded deaths from disease, and it was wondered how the EU would respond to the crisis while such a picture revealed the dominance of national mindsets (Rakt and Christl 2020). Hence questions about how it would affect the solidarity of the European Union began to rise in Europe. In order to understand public opinion and attitudes during the coronavirus crisis, European Parliament commissioned a multinational survey conducted by Kantar authors. According to these surveys, more than half of the respondents (52%) think that the measures taken are insufficient, nearly six out of ten respondents (57%) were not satisfied with the solidarity shown among the European Union countries, and 69% of participants want the European Union to demonstrate more competences to be more effective for fighting covid-19 crisis as a stronger actor (Zalc and Maillard 2020, 8). According to the same report, participants were asked about the strongest emotions they felt during the Covid-19 period, with 50% uncertainty, confidence at 41%, helplessness at 29%, frustration, fear, confidence, helpfulness, and anger were among the emotions most felt (Zalc and Maillard 2020, 11-12). As observable in Table 4.1., although negative emotions such as uncertainty took first place, positive emotions such as hope, and confidence were also reflected in the general emotional positions of the citizens of the European Union. The answers on both solidarity and emotions show that although the citizens of the European Union feel an atmosphere of uncertainty, and states do not act in solidarity, they still see the European Union as an actor that will take their citizens out of the crisis and take precautions, and at the same time, they still they have hope for the future.

Table 4.1. Emotional Status of European Citizens

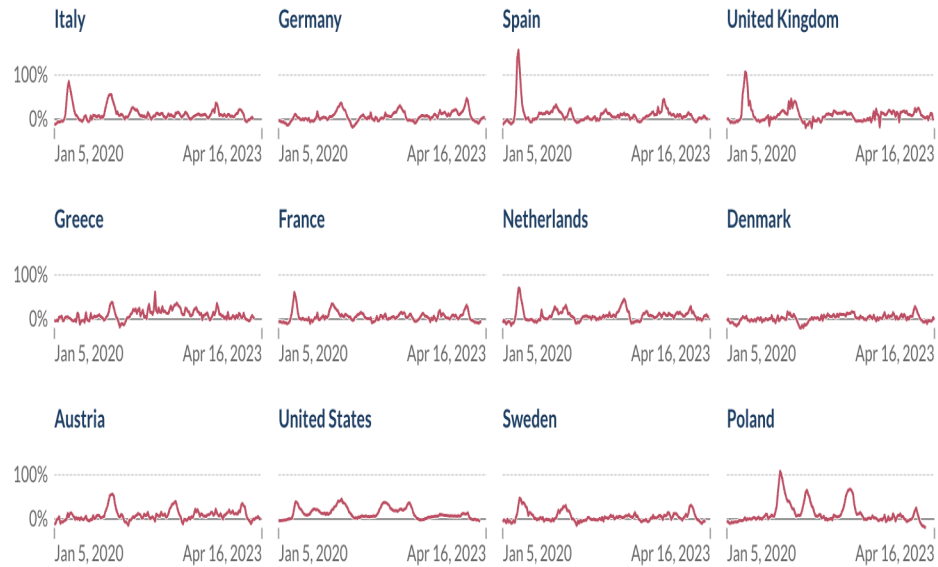
**Q11** What feelings best describes your current emotional status? Please select up to 3 answers.  
(MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(%)

	Uncertainty	Hope	Helplessness	Frustration	Fear	Confidence	Helpfulness	Anger	Other	Don't know
TOTAL	50	41	29	27	22	21	14	14	5	4
BE 	53	35	28	31	23	20	14	14	5	4
BG 	38	44	18	29	13	21	25	14	5	2
CZ 	48	38	22	17	20	17	12	11	8	7
DK 	41	47	12	31	11	35	22	5	9	7
DE 	42	44	20	25	17	24	23	11	8	6
IE 	60	47	23	34	21	20	12	8	10	2
EL 	69	42	10	30	30	11	10	21	5	1
ES 	63	37	43	35	22	11	14	19	4	2
FR 	48	32	37	25	35	18	8	16	3	4
HR 	35	43	30	27	15	19	18	14	9	5
IT 	53	44	33	25	23	21	7	16	3	1
HU 	50	42	36	22	15	20	23	11	7	5
NL 	44	36	17	22	16	38	24	6	8	6
AT 	38	53	12	22	11	31	28	11	9	4
PL 	56	34	39	32	24	10	6	17	5	4
PT 	56	53	6	23	25	25	10	4	4	2
RO 	49	56	34	23	15	31	12	14	4	3
SI 	39	45	22	17	10	18	34	20	11	4
SK 	53	43	26	20	21	21	13	15	7	4
FI 	52	40	16	38	13	29	12	5	8	5
SE 	44	32	18	30	18	14	17	8	9	8

Source: Zalc and Maillard 2020, 11-12. A Public Opinion Monitoring Study Report

In addition, with the lack of capacity and coordination, the differences dealt with the crisis increased hopelessness and created a negative picture in terms of solidarity. The severity of the crisis is different in each country and the number of deaths varies, once again revealing the differences between member states. This turned out to be a factor that undermined EU citizens' belief in a common future. For example, excess mortality was not the same in all countries, and some countries such as Spain and Italy recorded higher excess mortality at the beginning of the covid-19. According to the database conducted by Mathieu et al. (2020), it has been observed that excess mortality (Figure 4.1.), the reported deaths minus expected deaths (the deaths that would have occurred had it not been for the pandemic), increased considerably during the pandemic in countries such as Italy, Spain, and Poland; and did not reach serious peaks in countries such as Germany, France, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Each state seems to experience peaks at different times according to excess mortality.

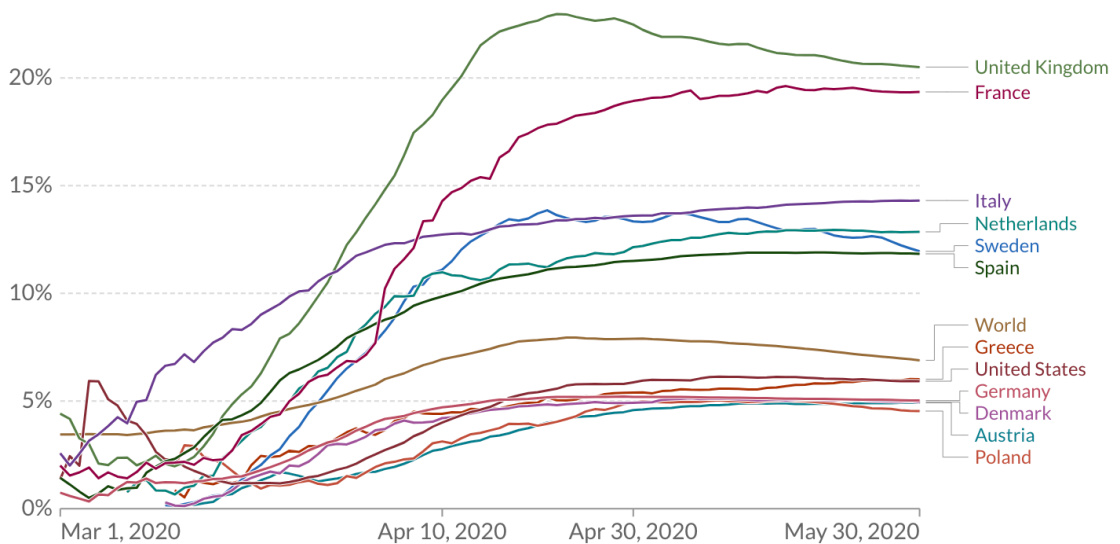
Figure 4.1. Excess mortality (Reported Deaths-Expected Deaths) in Selected Countries in the EU



Database: Our World in Data (2023a)

Similarly, case fatality rates in some states are much higher than the world average at the beginning of the covid-19. Due to different national strategies implemented by European countries, it is seen that case fatality rates (Figure 4.2.) peak at different times among European countries (Barbier-Gauchard et al. 2021, p.322).

Figure 4.2. Case Fatality Rate of Covid-19 in Selected Countries in the EU



Database: Our World in Data (2023b)

In summary, three facts or challenges were revealed that would feed the European Union's despair at the beginning of the covid-19 crisis.

1. Capacity and coordination deficiencies in states and the European Union.
2. Coordination problems regarding capacity deficiencies and differentiated practices in the measure and lockdown policies to deal with the crisis. Also, common policies were either not implemented or partially violated due to the lack of coordination.
3. Solidarity was not enough because the belief in a common future and single voice have been undermined by the incompetence of countries based on the lack of capacity in health systems and coordination problems. Divisions between countries have increased and solidarity has not been fully achieved.

# CHAPTER 5

## 5. REACTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

### 5.1. INITIAL ACTIONS FOR COVID-19 CRISIS

In the first period of the crisis, priority actions were implemented via existing mechanisms. It was crucial to understand the extent of the crisis and to bring the citizens affected by the crisis that started abroad, especially in China, to the European Union. With the initial wave of covid-19 in Europe, the European Commission announced an aid package worth 232 million euros to increase global preparedness, prevention, and containment against the virus on February 24, 2020 (European Commission 2022a). EU Civil Protection Mechanism has already been activated to bring European citizens from China, and, in addition, aid equipment was delivered to China (European Commission 2022a). When the covid crisis started in the European Union, there were two mechanisms as emergency response mechanisms; the first is Health Treats Decision (HTD) which includes actions about emergency plans, data collection, preparations, and response, and the other is the Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM) which is a matchmaking system to facilitate coordination of needs between states (Brooks and Geyer 2020, 1058-1059). Both mechanisms were activated at the beginning of the crisis, but considering the size of the crisis, it was seen that these two mechanisms' capacity was insufficient (Brooks and Geyer 2020, 1058).

In March, European states one by one implemented strict public health measures due to health concerns. The closure of schools and workplaces, the cancellation of concerts and collective events, the implementation of domestic and international travel restrictions and the implementation of stay-at-home policies, and the introduction of testing and isolation according to test results were the most important agenda in the world. So, the European Commission published guidelines and recommended flexing the rules through green lanes for the supply chain not to be disrupted and for the goods to pass

smoothly (European Commission 2020b). As the European Union takes steps to mitigate the transmission of the disease and maintain smooth mobility through guidelines and recommendations, it also extends support to its member countries in Europe. This assistance encompasses the provision of the necessary equipment as well as financial contributions through macro-financial aid packages and banking initiatives (European Commission 2022a). These steps have also focused on sustaining the agricultural sector, ensuring the banking sector's and small businesses functioning, and facilitating ongoing vaccine research activities (European Commission 2022a).

On 20 March, the European Commission proposed activating the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact, thus enabling member states to take measures to deal with the crisis in times of crisis (European Commission 2022). Using the general escape clause allowed member states to be given fiscal flexibility to mitigate the coronavirus's damage and negative social and economic impacts on member states (European Commission 2020c). The Commission's President Ursula Von der Leyen made the following statement in the press release that the EU can relax countries and individuals and expand its rules in this regard:

"Today, we propose maximum flexibility for our rules which will allow our nationals to support everybody - their systems, staff as well as the people so severely affected by the crisis. I want to make sure that we respond to the human as well as the socio-economic dimension of the Coronavirus pandemic in the best way possible" (European Commission 2020a, parag. 3).

The temporary extension of the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact with the use of the general escape clause is also an unprecedented step in dealing with economic crises at the European Union level, a step very different from the response to the 2008 sovereign debt crisis (Anderson and Heins 2021, 22-23).

Afterward, by making the most comprehensive statement on March 26, 2020, the European Council could draw a roadmap for the EU by integrating the measures within the EU. On March 26, 2020, the members of the European Council listed the actions that the European Union should take, determined in the video conferences on March 10 and March 17, and these are under five headings: prevention of the spread of the virus, the supply of medical equipment, support of research, take measures regarding the social and economic problems and to bring citizens from other countries as a first action plan



(European Council 2020a). Moreover, on April 9, 2020, an agreement was reached to provide European Stability Mechanism (ESM) loans with limited conditionality to member states and to create the “Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency” (SURE) as an EU instrument (Camous and Claeys 2020, 333). But still, a common budget or understanding was not fully decided between the states until May 2020.

## **5.2. SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTION: NGEU**

According to the statements made in the video conference of the Presidency of the European Council on 23 April 2020, the European Commission has been tasked to analyze the needs and put forward a recovery fund in connection with the budget to fight the current crisis (European Council 2020b). Thus, it was possible to accelerate the recovery fund and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) studies and to associate them with each other to arrange a growth strategy for the Von der Leyen’s Commission (European Council 2020b; Ladi and Tsarouhas 2020, 1047). All countries seem to desire a joint and scale-up response to the crisis. On April 24, Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen announced that there would be a global response to the coronavirus and that the European Union would contribute to this (European Union 2020).

However, the most extensive improvement plan that the European Union handled in this period was revealed with Next-generation EU, a long-term and modern budget announced on May 27, 2020. European Commission has proposed to create a new recovery instrument, Next Generation EU, embedded within a powerful, modern, and revamped long-term EU budget. The Commission proposed “the EU’s long-term budget for 2021 to 2027 of EUR 1.211 trillion (EUR 1.074 trillion in 2018 prices), topped up by EUR 806.9 billion (EUR 750 billion in 2018 prices) through Next Generation EU, a temporary instrument to power the recovery” (European Commission, Directorate-General for Budget 2021, 6).

Recovery plan activities were shaped and strengthened by the proposal of France and Germany initiative to direct the €500 billion grant to the regions and sectors most affected by the covid-19 crisis, taking into account the priorities of the European Union, and at the end of May, European Commission proposed the Next Generation EU recovery

plan worth € 750 billion, and 312.5 million euros of this will be the grant amount to be given to the member states as a Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) fund (Ladi and Tsarouhas 2020, 1048). The Commission will borrow from the markets to fund the Next Generation EU, and these funds will be spent on specific programs, as shown in Table 5.1. within a certain period (European Commission 2020f).

Table 5.1 Next Generation EU Allocations on Programs

<b>Key Features</b>	<b>NGEU</b>
<b>Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)</b>	672.5
<b>Grants</b>	312.5
<b>Loans</b>	360.0
<b>REACT-EU</b>	47.5
<b>Rural development</b>	7.5
<b>Just Transition Fund</b>	10.0
<b>InvestEU</b>	5.6
<b>RescEU</b>	1.9
<b>Horizon Europe</b>	5.0
<b>Total</b>	750.0

All amounts in EUR billion

Source: European Commission (2020f)

Total MFF 2021-27 allocations were determined under 7 headings; 1. Single Market, Innovation and Digital, 2. Cohesion, Resilience and Values, 3. Natural Resources and Environment, 4. Migration and Border Management, 5. Security and Defense, 6. Neighborhood and the World 7. European Public Administration and a significant portion of NGEU, 721 billion euros, is included in the scope of Cohesion, Resilience and Value heading (European Commission 2020f). Next Generation EU is an additional resource to the European Union budget, and it is used in an integrated way with the budget, thus enabling investments in areas such as environment, digital transformation, education, and health infrastructure strengthening. “Fiscally, NGEU authorizes the Commission to borrow on capital markets, mutualizes part of the costs of Covid-19 (fiscal risk-sharing) and proposes a new form of centralized tax collection” (Rhodes 2021, 1548). For this reason, NGEU is an important step that strengthens European solidarity by hosting social and economical improvements within the scope of the fight against the pandemic (Anderson and Heins 2021, 28).

### 5.3. NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE

It was not effortless for states and the EU to end the bargain, and as a result of five long-day negotiations, the Next Generation EU and the MFF and RRF were shaped on May 27, 2020 (Herszenhorn and Bayer 2020). The Frugal Four -Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden- which are fiscally conservative, objected to France and Germany's proposal of €500 billion grant because of their wish for the funds to be provided by loans instead of grants, and they proposed to set certain conditions for the allocated purposes for the states such as Italy, Spain and Greece (Ladi and Tsarouhas 2020, 1048).

Furthermore, the Netherlands has requested that it be subject to the rule of law condition for the distribution of funds to countries such as Poland and Hungary, which make the negotiations difficult in the European Union (Ladi and Tsarouhas 2020, 1049). On the other hand, at the summit held in July 2020, the rule of law was emphasized with a single clause, which was made only on its importance (European Council 2020c). At that time, the agreement on conditionality and acceptance of underlining the importance of the rule of law was also surprising and strange for even Hungary and it was perceived as a success of negotiations to solve the urgent need of the union (Gill and Chadwick 2020). Unfortunately, in December 2020, Poland and Hungary did not accept the rule of law conditionality principle introduced in July, the regulations adopted by the European Council against their votes and threatened to veto the entire agreement and financial package (Schramm and Wessels 2022, 267). Later, the European Commission declared that “no payment under the RRF is possible until Hungary has fully and correctly implemented these 27 ‘super milestones’ about remedial measures and other rule of law reforms related to judicial independence (European Commission 2022c, parag 6.). The presence of a statement emphasizing the importance of the rule of law without further elaboration during the European Council summit on July 21, 2020 (European Council 2020c), and the willingness of objecting countries to accept this to ensure the continuation of the process regarding covid-19 at that time, demonstrates that both member states and European institutions were focused on problem-solving. Although negotiations continued in subsequent processes, this highlights the immediate priority of both states and European institutions in addressing the challenges. The balance between the “problem-

solving instinct” and the desire to protect their “sovereignty reflex” has created uncertainty in the EU governance structure (Wessels 2016, as cited in Schramm and Wessels 2022, 257).

Also, the amount of funding for the Next Generation EU was quite high for the Frugal Four because, since the Thatcher era, when she asked for her money back, the states that contributed to the community wanted to increase their tax refunds to reduce their contributions to the union, so these states give more importance to R&D, digital transformation and green investment, and directing their resources to that improving green areas (Ladi and Tsarouhas 2020, 1048). As a matter of fact, the EU's agenda and the Work Programme took shape on the European Green Deal in January 2020, transforming Europe to be the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050, transforming a Europe empowered by climate justice and social policies with the Ursula Von der Leyen Commission taking office in December 2019 (Anderson and Heins 2021, 17). However, the unexpected covid-19 crisis has been included in the budget and policy. For this reason, the Next Generation EU was considered more than a recovery package during the crisis, and NGEU and MFF formed the building blocks of the European Green Deal and the Digital Strategy, which are two important headings in the roadmap drawn by the European Union, and the MFF was shaped differently from other budgets to build more green and resilient Europe (Anderson and Heins 2021, 13; European Commission, Directorate-General for Budget 2021).

Also, the European Commission has tried to strengthen the connection between social policies and climate security by employing the Just Transition Fund through initiatives aligned with the Digital Age and the Green Deal objectives, and the EU has taken steps toward the future (Vanhercke et al. 2021, 27). It can be observed that Next Generation EU reflects the efforts made by Europe to ensure its development and prevent anyone from being left behind.

Transforming Europe in economy and social policies with sustainable goals is of course not a new phenomenon with Next Generation EU. Among the decisions taken at the Lisbon European Council summit held on 23 and 24 March 2000 (known as the Lisbon Strategy), the EU's goal for the next decade is "become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth

with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Parliament 2000, parag.5). With the Lisbon Strategy, the European Union has tried to ensure the continuation and strengthening of employment and the economy with sustainable targets, by supporting and modernizing innovative initiatives and investments that strengthen the internal market, where R&D and innovation are at the forefront while transitioning to a knowledge-based economy.

The sustainable development goals of the European Union have enabled the EU to create a Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) in economic, social cohesion, and environmental issues since the 2000s, based on the annual reports prepared by the Commission, the European Council meetings, the progress reports of the countries, and the Eurostat reports (Sabato and Mandelli 2021, 117-118). The Lisbon and Europe 2020 strategies are important steps taken to achieve these sustainable development goals. In addition, the European Union adheres to the belief that "no one is left behind by 2030" by reducing poverty, applying development principles, and securing human rights by implementing the sustainable development goals announced in the United Nations 2030 Agenda (Sabato and Mandelli 2021, 119; European Commission, n.d.). Therefore, the road to Europe's green transition in 2020 is not surprising when compared to the 20-year distance covered.

Another area where action should be taken quickly is developing health strategies to overcome the crisis. Although an important resource was used to reduce the economic and social effects of the crisis, it was necessary to accelerate the vaccination efforts to overcome the health crisis, and investments in the health field were necessary. The EU embraced an EU vaccine strategy on 17 June 2020 to provide €164 million for startups and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), which progress on research on treatments and vaccines (Wolff and Ladi 2020, 1028). While the European Commission accelerated its vaccine development strategy while at the same time allocating 450 million euros for EU4Health Program in the previous budget, the 2021-2027 MFF also allocated 2.4 million euros under the Cohesion heading (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer 2021, 33; European Commission, Directorate-General for Budget 2021). "EU4Health" was introduced by the European Commission as a broad, single approach of the EU to overcome the most serious health crisis the EU has ever experienced (European Commission 2020d). This

program envisaged serious innovations such as eliminating inequalities in accessing health opportunities between countries, regions, and groups, increasing the healthcare system's capacity, applying digital innovations as a whole in Europe, and these reforms were created not only for covid-19 but for the entire health system. It has presented as a solution to the health problems that every EU citizen will face now and in the future.

#### **5.4. ACTORS OF COVID-19 CRISIS**

Member states and the European Union's institutions were aware of the joint action's significance in overcoming the crisis. While the European Union was overcoming the crisis, it made an unmatched effort with its institutions, agency, and actors and has been able to put into practice the actions. The European Council, which brings together European leaders attended by heads of state or governments of European member states, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, held 16 meetings, 11 of which were virtual, to evaluate the covid-19 emergency (Ladi and Wolff 2021, 34). According to Schramm and Wessels's (2022) study, the European Council acted as a crisis manager during the COVID-19 crisis, just as it has done in historical experience, and played a role as a horizontal and vertical fusion engine while it entrusts the European Commission and European institutions with detailed responsibilities through the detailed Summit Report on July, effectively coordinating with existing and newly developed instruments (Schramm and Wessels 2022). It also achieved significant success in establishing, distributing, and overseeing the NGEU as an innovative tool, ensuring political continuity and legal certainty by providing a channel for the budget (Schramm and Wessels 2022).

According to another perspective, Kassim (2023) has stated that the European Council generally takes the lead role in European Union crises, while other institutions play supportive and secondary roles (Kassim 2023, 612). However, in the case of the COVID crisis, with a “pluri-institutional approach”, the European Commission also played an active role in the initial stages of the crisis, and the European Commission acted faster than the European Council and sometimes shared the leadership role with it, while other times leading the European Council (Kassim 2023). The most significant factors are the COVID crisis emerging in areas where the European Commission has active

functions, and Ursula von der Leyen's proactive approach (Müller and Tömmel 2022, as cited in Kassim 2023, 614).

When the European Union began to combat the COVID-19 crisis, considering the extensive scope of the crisis in terms of health, logistics, and economic and social impacts, the European Commission embarked on a comprehensive fight together with its existing mechanisms and institutions. Over time, expanded and nourished these mechanisms and institutions to respond to the crisis. Initially, the Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM), which provides full-time assistance to member states, Health Threats Decisions (HTD) mechanisms were activated, and the Joint Procurement Procedure (JPP) supervised to understand the magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis and resolving coordination issues as a secretary of the European Health and Safety Committee (Kassim 2023, 619).

When we look at the EU's health institutions, they had created as a reaction to the small-scale epidemics experienced in the 2000s, and they do not have sufficient capacity and budget to deal with such large epidemics. Although the European Union was unprepared for a comprehensive global crisis like covid-19, it established some institutions on health in the 2000s. Among these, the most important is the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), which was established rapidly in 2005 after the SARS outbreak in 2003 to respond urgent need for coordination (Brooks and Geyer 2020, 1057-1058; Deruelle and Engeli 2021, 1384). Another example is that “The Health Threats Decision” was adopted after the Swine Flu outbreak in 2013, and member states should be prepared and give their reports on emergency plans under decisions (Brooks and Geyer 2020, 1058). Also, “The Health Threats Decision also establishes a Joint Procurement Agreement (JPA) for the collective purchase of ‘medical countermeasures’ (medicines, personal protective equipment (PPE), laboratory supplies etc)” (Brooks and Geyer 2020, 1059; Kassim 2023, 169). Thus, this indicates that the EU creates its institutions and policies on health as epidemics break out (Brooks and Geyer 2020, 1057-1058).

Not only the redesign of procedures and mechanisms but also the development and competence of institutions increase with the crisis. For instance, at the beginning of the covid crisis, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) was less competent than today. An agency that was reluctant even to make a recommendation

made recommendations on many issues, from the use of masks to the extent of the restrictions to satisfy the expectations of both the member states and the European Commission (Deruelle and Engeli 2021). These decisions helped the member states to determine their national strategies and the European Commission to supply information for combating the crisis (Deruelle and Engeli 2021, 1386-1389).

However, all precautions and organizations “are not designed to respond to a situation in which all member states require the same resources at the same time” (Brooks and Geyer 2020, 1059). Additionally, the Health Security Committee (HSC) in the European Commission and the Civil Protection Mechanism (CPM), which is a matchmaking system of equipment to respond to emergencies, were partially successful and partially unsuccessful (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer 2021, 36; Brooks and Geyer 2020, 1059). Nevertheless, during Covid-19, the ECDC collected data and created a network between member states while the Health Security Community coordinated the response and common applications (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer, 2021, 40). As stated in Deruelle and Engeli’s (2021) study, during the covid-19 crisis, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) redefined its role as an agency with the mandates received from the European Commission, acquire new operational capabilities, and experience a gradual institutional change with “*the process of layering*” whilst it evolves into an essential actor in preventing the crisis (Deruelle and Engeli 2021, 1390). According to a study, the institutional strengthening of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) did not weaken the European Commission; on the contrary, it demonstrated that the European Commission and ECDC working together were stronger in promoting coordination (Deruelle and Engeli 2021). It also highlighted that member states were not negatively affected by this collaboration; instead, they saw the benefits of improved coordination and emphasized the importance of having a roadmap in the health sector that member states could implement (Deruelle and Engeli 2021, 1392-1393).

On the other hand, the European Central Bank played a meaningful role in the COVID-19 crisis to ensure stability in the Eurozone. European Central Bank (ECB), which aimed to calm the financial markets with fast and determined actions, was in a leading position due to early measures. The ECB offered a non-standard monetary policy,



Pandemic Emergency Purchase Program (PEPP), which started to be implemented in March 2020, temporarily purchased securities from the private and public sectors amounting to 750 billion euros, increased to a total of 1,850 billion euros in June and December 2020 to protect against the risks of the covid-19 epidemic, while ignoring the eligibility conditions in the securities issued by the Greek government (European Central Bank 2020).

Also, ECB has tried to protect the refinancing of operations by expanding the scope of the Corporate Sector Purchase Program (CSPP) and facilitating collateral standards by increasing the scope of Additional Credit Claims (ACC) (European Central Bank 2020). Already, Christine Lagarde, The President of the ECB, tweeted on March 19, 2020, "Extraordinary times require extraordinary action. There are no limits to our commitment to the euro. We are determined to use the full potential of our tools, within our mandate" (Lagarde 2020). She boldly stated that the ECB is open to all kinds of measures for the continuity of the eurozone. The ECB has been very active since March 2020 in relieving the financial market. It has accommodated €3 trillion of liquidity through refinancing operations and lending to banks with the lowest interest rate, 0.75% and it freed up €120 billion of extra bank capital in addition to expanding regulatory ratios under PEPP (Barbier-Gauchard et al. 2021, 326). It has given importance to protecting the euro area from the effects of the crisis by trying to ensure the continuation of borrowing, supporting access to credit, increasing the capacity of banks, and providing international cooperation. As a significant institution, The ECB has tried to reduce the effects of the shock in the markets with the measures it has taken since the first day.

While the European Central Bank took measures to ensure price stability, the European Union also applied the general escape clause in relaxing strict rules on budget deficits that determined member states' expenditures (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer 2021, 42). It implemented measures and improvement plans to finance European debts as a recovery plan, aiming to demonstrate solidarity in the financial and monetary markets (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer 2021, 42). In doing so, the EU showed its determination to fight against the COVID-19 crisis both as a collective entity and in collaboration with one of its independent institutions, the ECB.

Lastly, all the EU actors have contributed to overcoming this crisis. The EU made temporary flexibilities in the internal market to relax strict competition rules and government aid regimes to authorize government subsidies for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) like enabling the use of the Temporary State Aid Framework to manufacture Italy's medical products and personal protective equipment in March 2020 (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer 2021, 42). Therewithal, as the financial institution of the European Union, the European Investment Bank (EIB) provides financing for investments according to the goals of the European Union. This institution has contributed to financing investments in line with the EU's objectives, aiming to promote sustainable growth, economic and social cohesion, and the development of the EU member states.

The EIB has financed COVID-19-related projects, including healthcare infrastructure, vaccine research and distribution, and business continuity support. It has also facilitated access to credit for companies facing liquidity issues, offering low-interest loans and flexible repayment conditions. As part of the COVID-19 response package, the EIB has implemented the European Guarantee Fund, which has been approved by the European Council, and this fund has increased support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by up to 200 billion euros (European Investment Bank, n.d.). As a privileged implementing partner for the InvestEU (topic in the Next Generation EU), which aims to stimulate recovery, green growth, high-quality jobs, and well-being throughout Europe, the European Investment Bank swiftly introduced its financial instruments. By presenting it with the support of the European Commission, it has boosted market confidence.

To brief this chapter, the European Union (EU) experienced a brief pause in assessing the crisis at the early stages of the crisis. However, existing mechanisms and institutions were activated to understand the magnitude of the crisis. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) was authorized, and its competencies were gradually increased to monitor the outbreak, facilitate information sharing, and coordinate efforts. "Green lanes" open to ensure the continuity of supply chains. Information-sharing mechanisms were established among member states, and regular meetings were held, even if they were virtual. ECB and EIB use their tool and try to relieve the economy.

Once the initial shock period passed, the EU provided significant financial support to mitigate the impact of the crisis. This financial support was integrated into the EU budget, the European Green Deal, and digital transformation, ensuring that the EU continues its path in line with sustainability principles. Support was also given to research and distribution of vaccines to recover from the crisis. The EU coordinated these actions with its institutions and agencies. To overcome the challenges the European Council played a crucial role as critical actor in crisis management at the European Union level within the framework of the “fusion perspective” (Schramm and Wessels 2022, 258) and European Commission was led on technical issues.

Overall, the EU took various actions to address the crisis, including activating existing mechanisms and institutions, strengthening coordination among member states, and in their institutions and agencies, providing financial support, and supporting research and distribution of vaccines. These efforts aimed to mitigate the effects of the crisis and facilitate recovery while aligning with the EU's sustainability goals.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **6. EFFECTS OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS ON THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

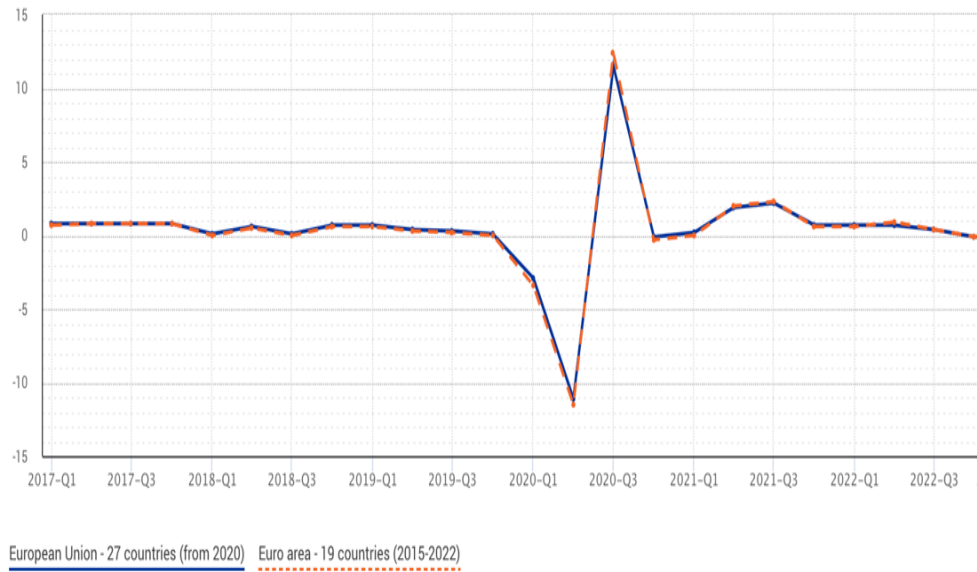
The extent to which the COVID-19 crisis has hindered or benefited the goals of European Union integration will consider while analyzing the crisis's repercussions. Therefore, the impacts of COVID-19 have not been categorized as negative or positive. The cause of not being able to make a distinction is that the effects are highly interconnected, and situations initially perceived as negative can lead to positive implications for integration as they are overcome. For example, during a European summit where negotiations continued for five days, the challenging nature of the negotiations might initially be expected to hurt the process. However, the demonstration of a shared willingness to develop a joint recovery plan can be a positive effect, indicating the commitment of member states to integration.

#### **6.1. ECONOMIC EFFECTS**

COVID-19 has significantly impacted many areas, including the economy, health, transport, education, and social life. The European Union has faced difficulties due to business closures, leading to unemployment, production halts, and supply chain disruptions. The obstacles in the first few months were related to capacity and coordination. However, the crisis is expected to have significant economic and social effects in the medium and long term. The most important is the decrease in general economic activity. People's spending demands have fallen due to the uncertainty about how long the current economic crisis will endure, the fear of losing their jobs, and the already diminished economic activity brought on by limitations. According to the World Development Report of the World Bank (2022), "economic activity contracted in 2020 in about 90 percent of countries, exceeding the number of countries seeing such declines during two world wars, the Great Depression of the 1930s, the emerging economy debt

crises of the 1980s, and the 2007–09 global financial crisis" (World Bank 2022, 1). In the GDP and main components (output, expenditure, and income) graph, seen in Figure 6.1. obtained with data from Eurostat, that there has been a severe decrease in both 27 countries and the euro area in 2020.

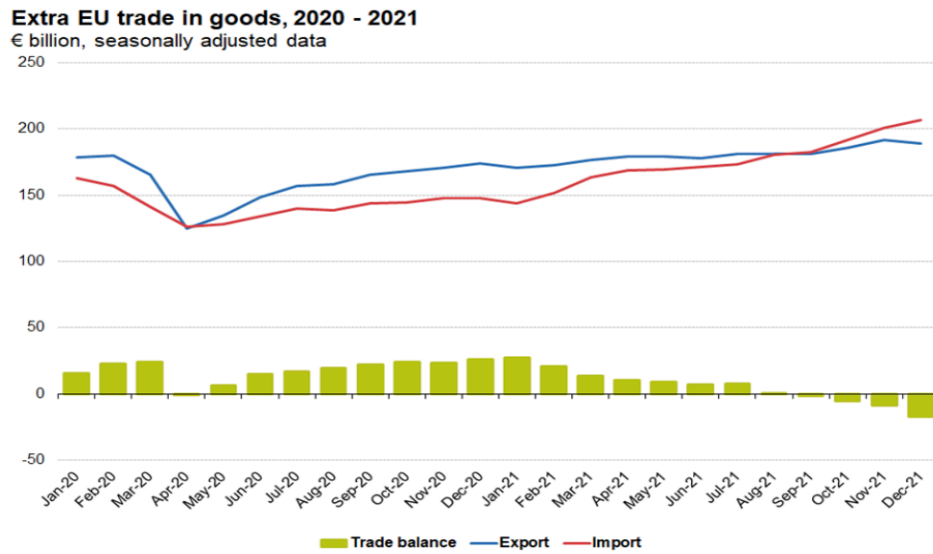
Figure 6.1. GDP and main components (output, expenditure, and income)



Source: Eurostat (2023a).

Secondly, one of the critical indicators showing that the trade has slowed down is the import and export rates. When examining the export and import data of the European Union for the years 2020 and 2021 in Figure 6.2., it is evident that there was a significant decline in both exports and imports during the second quarter of 2020. However, improvements were seen throughout 2021 (Eurostat 2023b).

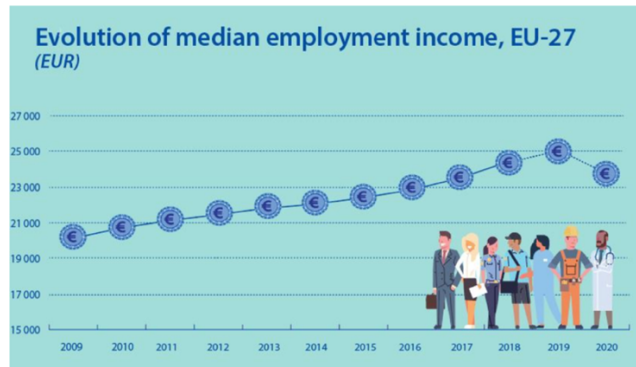
Figure 6.2. Extra EU trade in goods, 2020 - 2021



Source: Eurostat (2023b)

Thirdly, the rise in unemployment stands as a significant economic consequence. Botelho and Neves (2021) clearly state that “employment in the euro area decreased by around 3.1 million workers between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the fourth quarter of 2020” (Botelho and Neves 2021, 66). As unemployment increased, there was also a substantial decline in the incomes of employed individuals, which became significant barriers to economic development and the enhancement of prosperity. Due to the measures, there was a significant increase in the number of workers who could not go to work or experienced reduced working hours, leading to losses in employment incomes. Before the state compensation at the European Union level, the early estimated income losses for workers were projected to be minus -5%, as seen in Figure 6.3., and there was a total decrease of - 4.8% in worker incomes at the European Union level, with most of it being attributed to reduced working hours (Eurostat 2023c).

Figure 6.3. Impact of COVID-19 on employment income - advanced estimates



Source: Eurostat (2023c)

It is evident that COVID-19 has resulted in a significant decline in GDP and trade volume, unemployment, and a substantial decrease in workers' incomes due to reduced working hours. According to Molle (2006) one of the primary objectives of economic integration, according to the Maastricht Treaty, is to achieve increased growth and, consequently, greater prosperity (Molle 2006). The aim is to transform economic integration into a dynamic process that progressively eliminates economic borders among member states (Molle 2006, 10). It is evident that COVID-19 is dealing a blow to one of the most crucial objectives of economic integration by undermining the economy. According to the quantitative research conducted by Nadezhina et al. 2021 by “*using the  $\beta$ -convergence indicator (based on the convergence of growth rates) and the  $\sigma$ -convergence indicator (based on the convergence of the degree of differences across countries)*”, it has been observed that COVID-19 can play a detrimental role in European integration (Nadezhina et al. 2021, 1553-1554). However, the authors still believe that it can be altered through the complexity and diversity of European integration and the enhancement of the ability to adapt through political measures (Nadezhina et al. 2021).

Lastly, the inflation rate, which was 0.7% in 2020, experienced a significant increase in 2021, reaching 2.9%, and rose to 9.2% in 2022 (Eurostat 2023e). Although inflation followed a slow course initially, it caused a rapid increase in the 2-year period after the covid-19 crisis (Buelens and Zdarek 2022). Baba et al.’s (2023) working paper shows that it is still too early to explain the structural break in the Phillips curve due to the inflation increases in 2022 alongside COVID-19, but additionally, it indicates that these inflationary developments cannot be accounted for by known inflation determinants

(Baba et al. 2023). The study identifies that inflation has become more responsive to food price shocks in the presence of COVID-19 while the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 contributed to changes in household consumption patterns and the rise in commodity prices, the simultaneous decrease in the workforce combined with increased unemployment could have contributed to a significant inflationary surge (Baba et al. 2023, 9). It has been stated in Buelens and Zdarek's (2022) research that macro-economically, the COVID-19 pandemic had an external shock and caused both aggregate supply and demand shocks and the crisis affected sectors with varying intensity as it progressed (Buelens and Zdarek 2022, 7).

The current crisis, which began in the health sector, has the potential to become an economic crisis that requires the European Union to take monetary, financial, and political measures to address the significant economic impacts and provide assistance to member states and this situation will test the solidarity of the Union (Truchlewski et al. 2021, 1356).

## **6.2. INEQUALITIES IN THE EU**

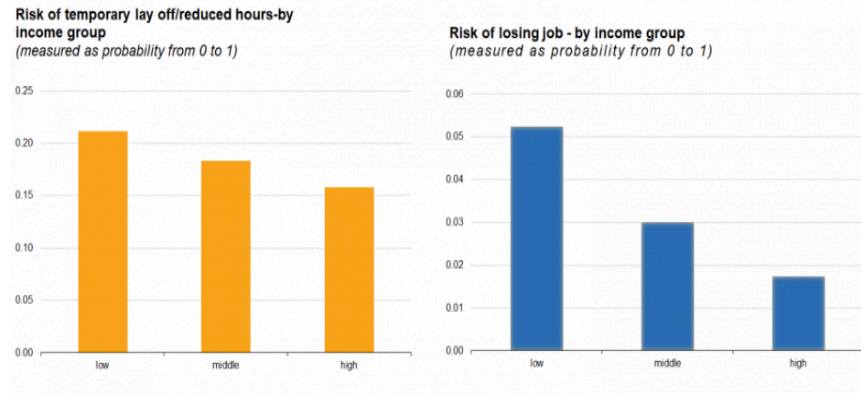
Aside from the economic consequences, COVID-19 has also caused social repercussions as a secondary effect. The pandemic has affected many people, particularly those who belong to the disadvantaged sector of society and are most impacted by the economic downturn. In the study, 2020 Year in Review, Blake and Wadhwa (2021) clearly state that there was a high level of extreme poverty all over the world during the Covid-19 period; workers were forced to live with decreasing wages even if they did not quit their jobs, due to the health expenditures of approximately 10 million people pushed into extreme poverty, not only short term but also long term economic opportunities of children decreased because of school closure, the internet inequalities in poor regions were not equal for everyone in poor regions (Blake and Wadhwa 2021). It is obvious that social effects will have great repercussions along with economic effects all over the world.

The European Union faced a comparable situation to the rest of the world. "While temporary layoffs during the lockdown are widely spread, the risk of losing the job is much more limited. However, both labor risks are highly unequal across the income



distribution with vulnerable individuals (i.e. lower income from work) being more likely to experience further income losses” (Figure 6.4.) (Eurostat 2023d).

Figure 6.4. Risk of layoff /reduced hours and risk of losing job by income group.



Source. Eurostat (2023d)

Inequalities were not only present among individuals but also among countries. The most affected countries, such as Italy and Spain, with the highest excess mortality (Figure 4.1.) and case fatality rate (Figure 4.2.) rates and experiencing the initial severity of the crisis, highlighted the limited capacities of these nations. Southern countries have been more severely impacted by the health crisis, as they have limited medical capacity and higher mortality rates. This has made them more vulnerable in managing the crisis. Moreover, the closure of borders and the measures taken by countries regarding export bans of personal protective equipment have further exacerbated the impact.

The pandemic's early effects on some nations, its greater effects on some industries, like tourism, and the disparate national responses to the crisis have all harmed the cohesion and sustainability of the monetary union, while the lack of a risk-sharing mechanism at the European level has made these issues even worse (Camous and Claeys 2020, 329). The repercussions of the crisis have not been symmetrical across the EU because they are proportional to each country's capabilities. The North-South divide, while highlighting regional disparities among European Union member countries, also reflects an economic, social, and political divide. Southern countries face greater economic difficulties than their northern counterparts, struggling with lower capacity to cope with economic challenges, slower economic growth, higher unemployment rates,

and fiscal issues, resulting in less prosperity for their citizens. Conversely, Northern European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden have more competitive industries, lower unemployment rates, and higher living standards. According to the Camous and Claeys (2020), the economic divide has been growing within the European Union with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to increasing heterogeneity within the monetary union because 1) based on previous economic indicators such as GDP per capita and unemployment, it was expected that the impact of the pandemic would be greater in Italy and Spain compared to Germany and the Netherlands, 2) considering that the service sector, particularly tourism, is a significant source of income in Southern Europe, it was believed that the likelihood of being affected by the crisis was higher in this region, 3) to cope with the economic consequences, countries adopted extraordinary fiscal measures like temporary lay-off benefits, and bank loan guarantees but the scale of these measures varied from country to country (Camous and Claeys 2020, 330-331). As a result of these differences, there could be political tensions between rich and poor countries, and additionally, market stress could result from worries that some countries might default or even consider leaving the union due to rising public debt and increased economic contraction (Camous and Claeys 2020, 331).

An event where the division among states and political tensions rise was clearly observed during the European Summit in March 2020 regarding shaping the European budget and recovery plan. The suggestions and attitudes of countries played a significant role. The countries most affected by the crisis wanted a solution as soon as possible. On the other hand, the so-called "Frugal Four" countries advocated for more loans rather than grants to overcome the crisis. During the negotiation stage, the disparities and vulnerabilities among countries were influential. At least at the beginning of the crisis, the covid-19 opened new areas of discussion about the future of the EU because of the tendency of countries to protect their national territory, citizens, and interests with a national instinct. Once again, covid-19 crisis made the distinctions between countries and started to cause groupings.

Presenting NGEU as a solution and being a lifeline to the countries most affected by the crisis helped states overcome the political strain and economic obstacles. In the

first place, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, and Poland had the highest share while the grants were distributed to Recovery and Resilience Facility. “The current maximum financial allocation is indicative based on the Commission’s Autumn 2020 Economic Forecast for real GDP growth in 2020 and 2021. The 30% allocations will be revised by June 2022, based on actual outturn data from Eurostat” (European Commission 2020e). The countries hit hardest by the crisis, such as Italy, Spain, and Poland, receive a significant share of the recovery fund grants based on their GDP growth.

### **6.3. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE**

The fact that the EU took too long to respond to the cases in Italy and that aid was sent from China and Russia to Italy during this period was interpreted as the European Union's delay in the crisis even if the European Union has institutions on health (Nas 2020). However, it is worth considering whether countries were also slow in responding to the crisis, despite the perception that the European Union was sluggish and experienced a delay. According to a quantitative study by Stockenhuber (2020) based on the Oxford stringency index, which evaluates eight social distance measures and one prevention measure, and a comparison with death rates, there is “a strong dependence on the number of deaths on the time of reaching the maximum stringency was found” (Stockenhuber 2020, 424). The study has also identified that the countries most affected by the crisis, such as Italy, Spain, Poland, and France, were also included in the group of countries that reacted very late to respond in 24-country classifications (Stockenhuber 2020). In other words, not only the European Union but also countries responded late to the crisis.

Foremost, a health crisis of this magnitude requires member states and the European Union to coordinate and manage it together. But at this point, the institutional structure of the European Union has some basic limitations because it is impossible for the European Union to decide on health issues alone without its member states. The European Union is a supranational structure that continues its activities with competencies given to it by the member states. As known, the EU separated competencies between itself and the member states into 3 different categories: 1-exclusive competences, where the European Union is fully authorized to legislate in the area like custom union and monetary policy, 2-shared competences, which both the EU and Member states are

responsible such as transportation, agriculture, internal market, etc., 3- supportive competences, which are supported by the EU but member states should allow implementations in the areas like health, culture, and education (Piris 2010, 74-75). It shows that the member states want to make their own decisions on issues with high national impulses like health and education. The fact that the health system is carried out differently in each country and the Union's lack of authority to determine a common health policy has put the European Union in a difficult situation (Akdogan et al. 2020, 33).

In addition, Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states that “The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster” (TFEU, Art. 222). De Rujiter et al. (2020) imply that mutual aid and cooperation in times of disasters are required by Member States by Article 222 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), but is not mandatory and, The EU Civil Protection Mechanism, established under the framework of Article 222 TFEU, relies on the voluntary participation of Member States (de Rujiter et al. 2020,18).

Although the main actors in the field of health are nation-states, due to common safety concerns, the European Union has shared competencies in the field of public health with member states, but these are limited. According to Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) human health protection has a priority and the EU is empowered to "...improve public health, prevent physical and mental illness and disease, and eliminate sources of danger to physical and mental health..." (TFEU, Art. 168), in addition, to encourage cooperation and coordination between member states and third parties while complementing the national policies (TFEU, Art. 168). Piris (2010) argue that “While the former Article 152(5) TEC stated that the EC action in this area ‘shall fully respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care’, the new Article 168(7) TFEU adds that ‘the responsibilities of the Member States shall include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them’ (TFEU, Art. 168), restricting further the possibility of EU action. Overall, the scope of competence of the EU in the field of public health will remain more or less unchanged after the Lisbon

Treaty. The definition of national policies in this field remains clearly an exclusive competence of the Member States' (Piris 2010, 320-321). That is the member states have more influence in the public health field than the European Union.

However, it started to be reinterpreted with the coronavirus pandemic. Because according to the Article 196 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), "The Union shall encourage cooperation between Member States to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing and protecting against natural or man-made disasters" (TFEU, Art. 196). Also, "the Commission importantly floated the idea of a re-interpretation of the public health derogation that is based on a notion of European public health and solidarity, rather than that confined to the nation-state (De Ruijter et al. 2020, as cited in Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer 2021, 42). Also, the EC acknowledged that member states' restrictions on the internal market were due to imperative conditions. "The European Commission reinterpreted the legal framework for public health exceptions to national market barriers. It acknowledges Member States' long-established right to adopt trade restrictions where necessary to protect public health, as set forth in Article 36 TFEU and in 'rule of reason' case law, which requires that both the positive and negative effects of a measure be used to determine whether it violates free movement law" (Brooks, Ruijter, and Greer, 2021, p.42). Moreover, the European Commission supervised Joint Procurement Procedure (JPP) about medical equipment with member states in the health field.

In a nutshell, reinterpretation of the public health derogations and actions for activating institutions, mechanisms, and procurements show the will and readiness for cooperation and coordination in the area of public health, which contains the supportive competences of the European Union. Thus, the European Commission has begun to play a more effective role in matters that fall under the sovereignty of states. According to Beach and Smeets (2020) study, under the "New Institutional Leadership model," when national leaders are unable to exercise long-term political leadership and negotiate specific reforms in specialized areas, they informally delegate their powers, even to the European Council President and closely associated high-level Commission officials. This shows that during crises, paradoxically, the European Council strengthens other institutions (Beach and Smeets 2020, 851).

# CHAPTER 7

## 7. COMPARATIVE CASE ANALYSIS

This study aims to reveal the effects of Covid-19 on European integration by analyzing it in a comparison with another crisis, highlighting whether strengthened cooperation and solidarity in problem-solving enhance integration. Hence, comparing the migration crisis and the Covid-19 crisis is crucial for the European Union to provide solutions for future challenges. To make a comparative case analysis with the covid-19 crisis, firstly, a detailed analysis of the migration crisis will be made in this section, and then a comparison will be conducted between the two crises.

### 7.1. MIGRATION CRISIS

The migration from the Middle East to Europe, which began in 2010, had become a problem that needed to be resolved by 2015 and once again tested the members of the European Union. Because the number of irregular migrants attempting to enter European Union countries is increasing exponentially yearly, and these migrants are trying to travel from Greece to Northern Europe (Nugent 2017, 7). However, this journey has become a humanitarian drama and created a crisis for the EU.

The European Union quickly supported rescue operations in the Mediterranean, especially in the region involving Greece, by providing financial support to enhance migration management and increase the capacity of their teams (Nugent 2017, 7). However, the fundamental solution was to deter and stop potential migrants from traveling to Europe. The European Union has discussed various measures to address the issue, such as the distribution of migrants among countries, providing support to the countries receiving migration, reducing migration toward the EU, and returning irregular migrants (Nugent 2017, 7). Although the proposal for mandatory refugee relocation, put forward by the European Commission, was rejected, there was a willingness to engage in supranational cooperation (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1121-1122). The crisis led to the

establishment of two important institutions to develop a common policy in migration: EU Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) and EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) (Scipioni 2018, 1366). Another solution is to support Turkey in terms of financial aid and visa exemptions, depending on the influx of migrants through Turkey, to reduce the number of migrants and manage the migration flows effectively (Nugent 2017, 8).

Historically, the issue of migration is one of the most challenging issues for the European Union to deal with at the European level. The absence of a central authority and weak monitoring, the lack of solidarity mechanisms regarding migration, and the fact that states' sovereignty governs migration and is a difficult area to modify have resulted in the inability to address migration practices at the EU level, despite the amendments made to temporary protection through the Amsterdam Treaty (Scipioni 2018). The Dublin system, the Common European Asylum System, was unsuitable for large numbers of immigrants (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1120), and its insufficiency has also emerged with the migration crisis (Grimmel 2021, 254).

The leading causes of this crisis are the deficiencies in the design of the Schengen system and the disagreements among member countries, like the Euro crisis (Nugent 2017, 7). The Schengen system is based on the freedom of movement for the citizens of member countries. However, this can only be achieved if there are external solid borders, but the system cannot function smoothly due to the pressure of excessive migration. Regarding the disagreements among countries, in 2014, Germany displayed a relatively moderate approach toward migrants (Nugent 2017, 8). However, in 2015 when Germany reintroduced border controls, it triggered a domino effect with other countries following suit and implementing border controls (Scipioni 2018, 1365). Additionally, countries felt more at ease dealing with the migration issue as long as it seemed distant from their regions (Nugent 2017, 8).

However, these efforts have not been considered sufficient for European integration and have failed to generate the desired failing-forward effect (Scipioni 2018, 1366). The Schengen crisis was unable to deepen integration (Schimmelfennig 2018, 969) and did not create enough pressure for cooperation (Hooghe and Marks 2019, 1121). According to neo-functionalism, it is understood that transnational interdependence and supranational capacity can change the outcomes of the crises like the eurozone and

Schengen crises (Schimmelfennig 2018, 974). The border controls and restrictions imposed among countries, the threat to Greece's Schengen membership, and the depth of divisions among countries regarding the migration crisis have significantly strained the Schengen system (Nugent 2017, 6). Thus, the migration crisis is one of the examples of the concrete lack of solidarity experienced by the European Union (Grimmel 2021, 254).

## **7.2. A COMPARISON OF THE MIGRATION CRISIS AND THE COVID-19 CRISIS**

The European Union has consistently faced various crises throughout the historical process. Nugent (2017) noted that historical crises were based on disagreements over specific issues while the impacts and challenges of recent crises are multidimensional, pushing the boundaries of the system as a "system-challenging" (Nugent 2017, 1-2). For example, the euro and migration crises emerged as "system-challenging" (Nugent 2017, 6). Both crises were exacerbated by deficiencies in integration that occurred with external influences and led to disagreements between countries on the point of sharing the burden of the crisis and had different effects on European integration (Schimmelfennig 2018, 970). Same as other crises, The COVID-19 crisis is a system-challenging crisis for the EU. Besides it encompasses some elements of previous crises. It resembles the concept of the empty chair crisis in terms of supranational and intergovernmental dynamics. From a macroeconomic perspective, it resembles the economic crisis of the 1970s, exhibiting features such as GDP and trade contraction, increased unemployment, and inflation. Like the Euro crisis, it exposes structural issues in integration. It also resembles the migration crisis as it arises in a domain largely under the sovereignty of member states. Like other crises, it highlights inequalities among countries and reveals that weaker countries are more heavily impacted and vulnerable in negotiations.



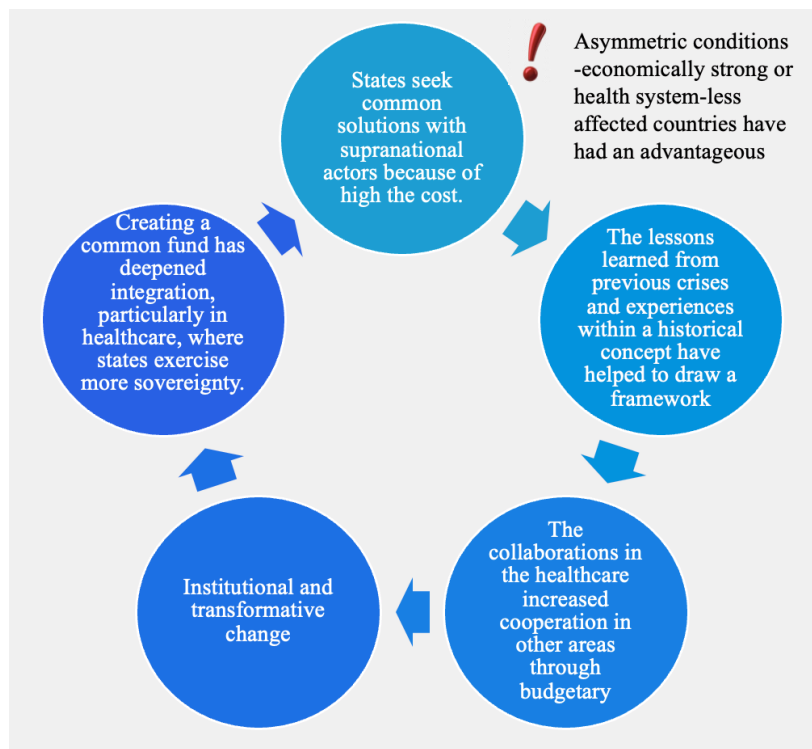
Table 7.1. Comparison of Migration Crisis and Covid-19 Crisis

	MIGRATION CRISIS	COVID-19
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>System-challenging Incomplete structure of the Schengen system: The absence of a central authority and weak monitoring</p> <p>Occurred with external influences</p> <p>Disagreements between countries on the point of sharing the burden of the crisis</p> <p>States' sovereignty area "Migration Policy"</p>	<p>System-challenging Structural Issues: Schengen system, Financial system, Competition threats,</p> <p>Occurred with external influences</p> <p>Disagreements between countries on the point of sharing the burden of the crisis</p> <p>States' sovereignty area "Health"</p>
<b>Solution</b>	<p>Supranational Cooperation - EU Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) and EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) Turkey Support</p>	<p>Existing mechanisms and institutions</p> <p>Next Generation EU</p>
<b>Effects on European Integration</b>	<p>Divide: the countries close to the place of migration were affected more</p> <p>Damage to the Schengen</p> <p>Little cost of non-agreement</p> <p>Not creating cooperation</p> <p>Unable to deepen integration and damage to the Schengen</p> <p>The concrete lack of solidarity</p>	<p>Divide: countries (un)stable health systems like Italy and Spain, but affected all countries</p> <p>Crisis Management</p> <p>States' unwillingness to accept the cost</p> <p>Collaborations in healthcare increased cooperation in other areas</p> <p>The influence of institutions increased through budget</p> <p>A practical solidarity solution</p>

From the historical perspective, it has been observed that the European Union has proposed significant agreements, packages, or actions to overcome the crises routinely like the Luxembourg Compromise, the European Single Act, financial or fiscal support packages provided to member states or candidate states (like Turkey's support in the migration crisis). Similarly, they proposed initiatives like the Next Generation EU (NGEU) in the covid-19. Moreover, crises have been addressing asymmetric situations among countries and determining how the burden of the crisis should be shared. In the case of COVID-19, there is a departure in terms of jointly shouldering the burden of the crisis and adopting long-term policies within the framework of the fiscal structure. The aim is to resolve differences among countries, promote the development and prosperity of the EU, and be better prepared for future crises. The EU has responded to covid-19 crisis with existing mechanisms and institutions; and developed an innovative tool. NGEU aims to address structural problems and increase solidarity, as well as jointly shoulder the responsibility of the crisis, in areas such as finance, while seeking collective solutions to future issues of the European Union. The lessons learned from previous crises

and experiences within a historical concept have helped to draw a framework. In this regard, the Covid-19 crisis differs from other crises in terms of the outcomes derived from it. " 'Next Generation EU' (NGEU) – not only tells us that exits are possible; more radical reforms can occur" (Rhodes 2021, 1549). As European integration deepens through cumulative experiences and practices, solutions can transform.

Figure 7.1. Theoretical Crisis Assessment Stages



From the theoretical perspective, in the crisis nations have been unwilling to accept the cost of dissolution, as seen during the covid-19 crisis. From the point of view of neo-functionalism, states first seek common solutions with supranational actors (Niemann and Ioannou 2015, as cited in D'Erman et al. 2020, 270). At the same time, nation-states are also aware of the asymmetric conditions. Because according to liberal intergovernmentalism, although states try to develop a common policy in a crisis, the burden of costs is not distributed equally (Moravscik, 1993, p.486-487). While the countries that are hitten harshly by the crisis are the most open to bargaining and the closest to making concessions, the countries less affected by the crisis will be in a stronger position, and this determines the national interests of the states in the asymmetric relations and the unequal distribution of costs (Schimmelfennig, 2018, p.973). It has experienced

that in the covid-19 crisis, some social segments, and countries, such as Italy and Spain, whose unstable health systems are affected more. "The 'symmetric' coronavirus shock hit countries that were in highly asymmetric conditions" (Celi, Guarascio, and Simonazzi 2020, 411). The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that economically strong or health system-less affected countries have had an advantageous position in shaping negotiations. The Frugal Four's advantageous position in negotiations and the impact of Germany and France in the crisis exit can be highlighted. However, a distinct reality emerged during the COVID-19 crisis: it affected all countries in some way or another, alongside the economic slowdown, and required the collective efforts of all nations for its resolution. However, in the migration crisis, while the countries close to the place of immigration were affected more, the northern countries were not affected that much. During the migration crisis, unlike the COVID-19 crisis, not all states were heavily affected. Therefore, approaching a common solution became difficult. In this regard, COVID-19 differed from a migration crisis as its impact was more widespread.

Secondly, the European Union has experience and lessons from the euro crisis in managing the financial crisis. For example, the euro crisis revealed that 1) crises have a three-way contagion effect on the financial system, sovereigns, and economic sectors, exerting pressure on public finances, 2) a common European response and coordinated economic and fiscal policies yield better results in managing and overcoming a crisis, 3) the importance of cohesion and solidarity within the single market, revitalizing economic sectors, is crucial for exiting a crisis (European Court of Auditors 2020, 60-61). Similar to the euro crisis, the covid 19 crisis is also a financial crisis that poses a risk of vulnerability to the financial system, and also there is a risk that the COVID-19 crisis may deepen economic divergences considering the differences between countries (European Court of Auditors 2020, 60-61). Therefore, the Union must tackle these structural problems, as they can exacerbate the existing disparities and create further challenges (Celi, Guarascio, and Simonazzi 2020, 412). On the other hand, the migration crisis is not a financial crisis, but rather a social, political, and humanitarian crisis. Moreover, the EU did not have significant experience in the field of migration as it did during the Euro crisis. Also, the member states were more divided in migration matters. Therefore, the EU had to provide consensus in this area primarily politically rather than technically.

In the next step, even if nations may have participated in this collective decision for their own economic and political interests, the collaborations in the healthcare sector have laid the groundwork for strengthening European institutions in the covid-19 crisis. The crisis is a part of the integration process and has a positive impact when national states grant more authority to European institutions to solve problems (Schmitter 2012, 39). Crises can have the potential to trigger institutional change if consensus is achieved to initiate this change (D'Erman et al. 2020, 269). "The corona crisis offers an important window of opportunity for institutional, hence transformative, change" (D'Erman et al. 2020, 270). The improvement of the ECDC during the covid-19 has been an example of institutional change. Also, during the crisis, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Central Bank played positive and constructive roles in managing intergovernmental negotiations and contributing to crisis management (Rhodes 2021, 1550). On the other hand, states couldn't reach a common decision during the migration crisis and nation-states did not intend to grant more authority to European institutions to solve problems as they did in covid-19 crisis. Even if they had reached a consensus for a collective solution, supranational institutions, and agencies in the field of migration had not yet been established or their activities were very limited. The Dublin system was also inadequate for the great influx of people. As we witnessed during the Covid-19 crisis, the EU had been gradually establishing its institutions in the healthcare sector, albeit to a limited extent, since the early 2000s. However, in the field of migration, these supranational institutions were only beginning to be established when a crisis emerged in 2015.

Eventually, these collaborations have provided opportunities for increased cooperation in other areas through budgetary in covid-19 crisis. Creating a fund in a budget channel through the joint borrowing of member states with the Next Generation EU (NGEU) is an essential step towards using European Union resources to address the sustainability goals of the EU, particularly in the context of green and digital transformation. From a future perspective, the COVID-19 crisis can be seen as an acute crisis for the European Union in the context of the environmental and climate crisis, serving as a starting point to address existing challenges in health, environment, and sustainable development (Bongardt and Torres 2020, 131). The distribution of funds that cover sustainability and future-focused green and digital transformation challenges in a

financial framework is a step toward better integration since it begins in an area where member states have more effective sovereignty and shapes the direction of the EU. If such steps were not taken, the spillback effects of the crisis, starting from the healthcare sector, could have negatively impacted integration in other areas. However, it may not always be possible to reach a common decision on how and to what extent these changes should be made in all areas. NGEU doesn't solve all the problems in the European Monetary Union (EMU) and doesn't eliminate asymmetrical relationships between countries, but it has shown that it is possible to emerge from the crisis (Rhodes 2021, 1549).

As an example, Schimmelfennig (2018) evaluates both the euro crisis in 2010 and the Schengen crisis in 2016 in terms of transnational interdependence and supranational capacity and concludes that both crises have different consequences on European integration, while the euro crisis strengthens European integration, the Schengen crisis does not. Also, Schimmelfennig (2018) results that if the previous transnational interdependence and supranational capacity are strong enough, the crises will strengthen integration with spillovers (Schimmelfennig 2018). In the COVID-19 crisis, due to the nature of the crisis itself, there was already a high level of transnational interdependence. There was a certain level of supranational capacity, albeit weak, prepared by previous health crises such as SARS and Ebola. On the contrary, in the migration crisis, there existed an interdependency among the southern countries that directly experienced the immigration issue at their borders, rather than a transnational dependency. Additionally, the supranational capacity in the field of migration was limited. As a result, the migration crisis had relatively insufficient incentives for cooperation and a lower cost of not reaching an agreement (Hooghe and Marks, 2019, 1120-1121), whereas these costs have escalated further in the COVID-19 crisis.

Moreover, crisis situations reflect the times when solidarity is most needed and serve as important tests (Grimmel 2021, 258-259). However, refugee crises have shown that solidarity could not be established in this context and that solidarity only emerged as a byproduct of national interests (Grimmel 2021, 258-259). While many institutions and actors in the European Union, emphasize the importance of greater solidarity in keeping Europe together, the practical impact of this concept on crisis management has been less significant (Grimmel 2021, 243). The clearest example of the lack of solidarity within

Europe has been the refugee crisis (Grimmel 2021, 255). Looking at the COVID-19 crisis, we also see a similar pattern that solidarity is driven by the avoidance of the costs of disintegration and economic interests. However, it has been manifested through stronger practical solutions if we contrast the migration crisis. European integration has become more intricate, involving bilateral and national interests, interdependence, and supranational capacity. Despite the COVID-19 crisis, the European Union's integration measures were unaffected. In fact, the crisis bolstered confidence in nation-states to overcome it and renewed their belief in integration.

So, what prompted the nations to decide that they did not make in the other crises, which prompted them to make such a big leap in covid-19? Firstly, The COVID-19 crisis is characterized by its magnitude and the chain reaction it creates in various fields, with an uncertain duration. The cost of not taking common measures in the face of such a significant crisis is extremely high. From a macroeconomic perspective, it has emerged as a powerful crisis affecting GDP, unemployment, trade volume, and inflation. The crisis has created a supply-demand shock and tested countries' logistics capabilities. The massive economic crisis from COVID-19 demonstrates the need for a joint response (D'Erman et al. 2020, 271). Moreover, in terms of its effects, it has revealed differences between countries, primarily in the healthcare sector and then in the economic domain. It has led to countries violating or being unable to generate common policies, even for a short period. Another challenge of the crisis is that it profoundly impacts the healthcare sector. This area falls within the sovereignty of countries and typically involves a supportive role in policymaking by the European Union. These factors have had economic, political, and institutional effects on European integration.

Secondly, The Union needs to address not only the financial problems but also the structural issues that have led to increasing divergences among member states (Celi, Guarascio, and Simonazzi 2020, 412). This crisis puts countries in a difficult position in the market and may give an unfair competitive advantage to wealthier countries, which indicates a tendency for the Covid-19 crisis to repeat the mistakes that followed the 2008 crisis (Celi, Guarascio, and Simonazzi 2020, 412). It shows "the fragility of European common goods like the single market and the Schengen agreement and even the

Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) if national measures are incompatible or insufficiently coordinated" (Bongardt and Torres 2020, 131).

Thirdly, France and Germany's 'embedded bilateralism' enabled a common consensus to emerge during the Corona crisis through a joint rescue package, allowing them to overcome the crisis, and this demonstrated the effectiveness of 'embedded bilateral relations', which prioritized integrated relationships rather than national interests, in contrast to liberal intergovernmentalism (Krotz and Schramm 2021, 13). On the other side, behind the NGEU, there are indeed significant national interests for both Germany and France in terms of ensuring the continuation of the EMU because France wants to protect the French economy while Germany is being strong in the market has not always benefited Germany in historical context (Celi, Guarascio, and Simonazzi 2020, 420-421). But still, at a time when negotiations and debates were most intense between countries, the joint agreement between France and Germany, two significant powers in Europe with a shared political will, has been a crucial turning point in overcoming the crisis.

To sum up, while the migration crisis did deeply affect the Schengen system, its effects were not as widely felt as the COVID-19 crisis. Moreover, not all countries were equally affected by the migration crisis. In contrast, every country was impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, the migration issue, being a political matter, gave rise to more divisions in policy, whereas the health crisis was a more technical matter. Already, the European Union had previous experience in dealing with technical matters and financial crises. However, in the realm of migration, there was a lack of supranational capacity and experience. As a result, reaching a consensus on migration was more challenging compared to COVID-19. In the case of COVID-19, the process is expedited through member states' consensus, facilitated by supranational institutions and actors, potentially leading to positive effects across various domains. However, in the realm of migration, initial disagreements among countries prevented subsequent stages from unfolding, causing the process to stagnate. Despite the involvement of supranational institutions and support, a transformative impact seen in COVID-19 could not be achieved in the migration crisis. Overall, the complexity of the migration issue, coupled with varying national interests and a lack of supranational capacity, hindered the ability to achieve transformative effects.

# CHAPTER 8

## 8. CONCLUSION

### 8.1. SUMMARY OF STUDY

COVID-19 is a significant crisis that has deeply affected the entire world. Starting in the healthcare sector, this crisis has had wide-ranging effects on various aspects of the European Union. In the beginning, the COVID-19 crisis's impact is predicted to be more prominent in scale than the euro crisis (European Court of Auditors 2020, 60). Also, the covid-19 crisis requires urgent intervention because of the scale, the initial uncertainty, risk of losing human life. The European Union has embraced an approach: what is the problem (challenges), what is the impact, and what is the solution?

Challenges are mainly in the areas of capacity, coordination, and solidarity. The Covid crisis revealed the inadequate healthcare capacities of member states to cope with such a severe crisis and the EU's lack of ability to manage and coordinate these capacity gaps in the health sector. Member states took individual measures, including border controls, which violated the Schengen system of the EU, to overcome capacity and coordination issues and prevent the spread of the disease. Lack of common policy due to the capacity and coordination shortcomings, varied implementations, violations of common implementations, and the prioritization of national interest tested the notion of solidarity. Additionally, the varying degrees and timings of the crisis's impact on different countries further exposed their disparities.

When such a significant crisis begins, it is naturally expected that the European Union primarily ensures crisis management. It is envisaged for the EU to act as a part of crisis management 1) by using the existing mechanisms efficiently, 2) by estimating the possible secondary effects of the crisis and drawing a projection accordingly, 3) by ensuring communication with all segments affected by the crisis (Rhinard 2020). With



the measures listed below, the EU progresses in crisis management as problems are solved. Initial measures of the EU:

- Utilizing its existing mechanisms, such as Civil Protection Mechanisms and Health Threat Decisions.
- Provide ESM (European Stability Mechanism) loans with limited conditionalities.
- The activation of the general escape clause in the Stability and Growth Pact.
- Create an innovative tool: NGEU
- Usage of the mechanism of institutions and agencies. ECB; EIB
- Make the institutions stronger: ECDC

The European Union is trying to find a solution to the crisis by strengthening existing institutions and mechanisms and creating an inclusive tool. The general escape clause provides member states with financial flexibility by allowing temporary increases in their budget deficits and public debts in covid-19 crisis. Additionally, ESM (European Stability Mechanism), established during the Eurozone crisis, provides financial stability via fiscal support in crises in Eurozone countries. The European Central Bank (ECB) has been purchasing government bonds since 2012 to provide liquidity, which requires political approval under the ESM mechanism, and additionally, it provides financing facilities to governments through public sector purchases (Camous and Claeys 2020, 334-335). During the COVID crisis, existing mechanisms, institutions, and agencies were activated first. Moreover, efforts were made to quickly address countries' financing needs through reduced conditionality in ESM loans and the ECB's PEPP mechanism (Camous and Claeys 2020, 336-337). Undoubtedly, these measures were implemented rapidly, thanks to the lessons learned from the euro crisis.

Eventually, the EU evaluates covid-19 as a global crisis to respond immediately and takes measures with a more holistic approach, not only in the field of health and economy, and it aims to provide long-term benefits to its members and citizens and to strengthen the sense of solidarity and cooperation among the European Union States by implementing a comprehensive plan, Next Generation EU. In that huge plan, the EU presented all issues from health to budget and economy, education to digital transformation, including green energy.

As a solution, the Next Generation EU (NGEU) holds significant importance and is a crucial development in the historical context. NGEU involves the doubling of European fiscal resources within five years, and it allows the European Commission to raise funds on such a large scale for the first time and allocates the highest number of resources to the most affected countries (Schramm and Wessels 2022, 257). The acceptance of the Next Generation EU (NGEU) through joint fiscal responsibility and common borrowing allows for debt repayment through contributions provided by the EU budget (Camous and Claeys 2020, 336). NGEU enables the support of countries most affected by the crisis, such as Italy and Spain, as well as countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, and Croatia, with the highest share of gross national income, and this distribution of resources from wealthier countries to poorer countries became possible (Camous and Claeys 2020, 337). NGEU is a significant step that strongly influences financial structure with European political dynamics. Also, the European Union demonstrated a concrete example of solidarity, took measures to address structural issues, and aimed to prepare itself better for future crises. Undoubtedly, past experiences played a role in these efforts. In the historical context, the European Union's goal is to achieve peace and prosperity, and the measures taken against COVID-19 are aligned with these objectives.

While the Covid-19 crisis exposed disparities among nations, its impacts resonated universally, and stress-tested a system susceptible to the deterioration of trade imbalances. Even if a country wasn't directly affected by Covid-19, indirect repercussions could manifest due to global interdependence. Of course, the disparities between countries were evident, but all nations were impacted. Left unresolved, the issues stemming from Covid-19 had the potential to lead to economic and political hardships for all countries. The risk of not finding solutions collectively was quite high. However, in the case of the migration crisis, while not taking precautions held high risk for only southern countries, it didn't seem as significant for northern countries.

Moreover, during the Covid-19 crisis, countries initially displayed the will to prioritize finding solutions. Subsequently, they reached a consensus and, in collaboration with supranational institutions, implemented preventative measures. Collaboratively, states agreed to share the burden of the crisis, bolstering cooperation through a shared

budget to reinforce the EU's sustainability goals and future prospects. However, in the migration crisis, the collective drive among all countries to find solutions wasn't as robust as in the Covid-19 crisis. In addition, supranational institutions were inadequate or newly established. It is also proof that The EU establishes or improves institutions as crises emerge. As these institutions' capacities grow, they become more effective in crises. However, it's not just supranational capacity but also the impact of the crisis that accelerates collective action. Essentially, the crux of the problem lies in countries deciding to overcome a crisis; this prompts supranational entities to spring into action and amplify their effects. Crises may initially portray the EU as an intergovernmental organization, as per literature, but once the moment of decision is surpassed, the EU can continue fortifying its supranational structures and forge ahead. Therefore, even though both the migration crisis and the Covid-19 crisis emerged in a domain where states hold sovereignty, their impacts on integration varied. Because differences in nation-states' decisions to find solutions and grant authority to supranational entities set them apart, leading to distinct outcomes. While the Covid-19 crisis transitioned from challenge to opportunity and could create spillover effects, the migration crisis continues to be a challenge for the EU until states collectively embark on a search for solutions in this realm.

## **8.2. CONCLUSION**

Throughout the history of European integration, Europe has faced many crises, and especially in the recent period, the number of crises increased, and their nature has changed and continues to affect the European Union. Grimmel (2018) stated that "crises have not only accompanied the integration process since its very beginning, but the whole European project is the direct result of crisis (Grimmel 2018, 226). Even though fighting crises and finding solutions is a concept recognized by the EU from a historical perspective and the EU is experienced in how it will transform with each crisis, experiencing a crisis within crises, and realizing that crises are also transforming and changing over time appear as new challenges for the EU to be overcome. Naturally, the measures to be taken in such crises will be of different dimensions.

European integration is a result of the objective to strengthen relations among European countries, ensuring peace and increasing economic prosperity. This endeavor aims to foster unity, development, and progress in political, economic, and social aspects. When we examine the historical process of the European Union, it becomes evident that achieving peace, enhancing economic prosperity, and promoting collaboration are indicators of the EU's deepening integration process. These are compatible with the four driving forces in the formation of the EU at the Hague Congress. Historically, numerous significant steps have been taken to achieve these goals, such as implementing policies, free movement, establishing a single market, and adopting a common currency.

In conclusion, covid-19 emerged as an important and unexpected crisis in the 21st century and took its place in history with radical solutions. This study, which examined the effects of Covid-19 on European integration, is revealed that both neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism have worked together to understand the initial moments of the covid-19 crisis. While liberal intergovernmentalism provides an immediate perspective to understand the crisis, neo-functionalism offers a long-term perspective. Comparison with the migration crisis showed that countries' decisions have been significant to find effective solutions. Still, once decisions are made by nation-states, supranational mechanisms have increased their effectiveness, and institutions have contributed to overcoming the crisis in a balanced manner. In fact, this is a crisis that historically allowed the European Union to take initiative in accordance with the interests of national states. It is proof of the European Union will progress by taking initiatives as long as it serves the national interests (Watts 2008, 242). The European Union appears to have overcome such a significant crisis, which could have jeopardized its economic and political integration, by adhering to its historical principles, drawing lessons from the past, and formulating policies that facilitate future green initiatives without leaving anyone behind. As a result of the hypotheses, the EU shows that it can overcome these challenges. As the challenges are overcome, at least the European integration does not weaken, it takes on a more complex structure and becomes stronger with the increase of the influence of supranational institutions.

Therefore, shaping the measures taken into a structure suitable for all member states is a crucial step for the next crises because the comparison demonstrated that

national interests are vital for member states to find solutions. In the case of Covid-19, allocating resources not only to the states directly affected by the crisis but also to future-oriented sustainable investments that even less affected countries could benefit from proved to be incentivizing for all nations. It seems that turning towards radical solutions that align with the interests of all countries, encompassing not only the crisis-stricken area but also other domains, and strengthening supranational institutions will expedite the EU's recovery from crises.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Books and Handbooks

- [1] Bickerton, C. J. (2012). *European Integration: From Nation-States to Member States*. OUP Oxford.
- [2] Bryman, A (2012). *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [3] Eichengreen, B. (2007). *The European Economy since 1945: Coordinated Capitalism and Beyond*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- [4] Eichengreen, B. (2008). *The European Economy since 1945: Coordinated Capitalism and Beyond*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- [5] Grimm, A. (2018). *The Crisis of the European Union: Challenges, Analyses, Solutions*. London: Routledge
- [6] Haas, E. (1968). *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-1957*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- [7] Haas, E.B. (1958). *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces 1950-57*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- [8] Halperin, S., & Heath, O. (2012). *Political Research Methods and Practical Skills*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [9] Hix, S. (2005). *The Political System of The European Union*. New York: Macmillan.
- [10] Lamont, C. (2015). *Research Methods in International Relations*. London: Sage.
- [11] Loth, W. (2015). *Building Europe: A history of the European Unification*. (Trans. R. F. Hogg). Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.
- [12] McGiffen, S. P. (2006). *The European Union: A critical guide*. London: Pluto Press.
- [13] McCormick, J. (2015). *Avrupa Birliđi Siyaseti*. (Trans. by D. Özsel) Ankara: Adres Yayınları.
- [14] Molle, W. (2006). *The Economics of European Integration: Theory, Practice, Policy*. Routledge.
- [15] Monnet, J. (1978). *Memoirs*. London: Collins.
- [16] Nugent, N. (2017). *The Government and Politics of the European Union*. London: Palgrave.
- [17] Kaya, A., Düzgit, S. A., Gürsoy Y., & Beşgöl Ö. O. (2020). *Avrupa Birliđi 'ne Giriş: Tarih, Kurumlar ve Politikalar*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- [18] Patel, K. K. (2020). *Project Europe: A History*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- [19] Piriş, J. (2010). *The Lisbon Treaty A Legal and Political Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [20] Rosamond, B. (2000). *Theories Of European Integration*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- [21] Troitino, D. R. (2013). *European Integration: Building Europe*. Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

- [22] Vanhercke, B., Spasova S., & Fronteddu, B. (Eds). (2021). *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020, Facing the pandemic*. Brussels: European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE).
- [23] Watts, D. (2008). *The European Union*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- [24] Wessels, W. 2016. *The European Council*. London: Bloomsbury.
- [25] Wiener, A., & Diez, T. (2009). *European Integration Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### **Chapters in Edited Books**

- [1] Anderson, K. E., and Heins E. (2021). After the European elections and the first wave of Covid-19: prospects for EU social policymaking. In: Vanhercke, B., Spasova S., and Fronteddu, B. (Eds.), *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020, Facing the pandemic*. Brussels: European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), p.p. 13-32.
- [2] Brooks, E., Ruijter, A., and Greer S. L. (2021). Covid-19 and European Union health policy: from crisis to collective action. In: Vanhercke, B., Spasova S., and Fronteddu, B. (Eds.), *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020, Facing the pandemic*. Brussels: European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), p.p. 33-52.
- [3] Dinan, D. (2018). Understanding European Union governance: political challenges of the integration Project. In: Grimmel, A. (Ed.), *The Crisis of the European Union: Challenges, Analyses, Solutions*. London: Routledge, 13-25.
- [4] Moravcsik, A. & Schimmelfennig, F. (2009). Liberal intergovernmentalism,. In Wiener, A., and Diez, T. (Eds.), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford: OUP, 67–87.
- [5] Müller, H., & Tömmel, I. (2022). Strategic leadership: Ursula von der leyen as president of the European Commission. In H. Müller, & I. Tömmel (Eds.), *Women and Leadership in the European Union*, 311–330.
- [6] Sabato, S., and Mandelli, M. (2021). Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into the European Semester: a governance conundrum for the von der Leyen Commission? In: Vanhercke, B., Spasova S., and Fronteddu, B. (Eds.), *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2020, Facing the pandemic*. Brussels: European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and European Social Observatory (OSE), p.p. 113-132.

## Articles

- [1] Akdoğan, M., Günay, A., Say, B. & Gündoğan Gür, N. (2020). Avrupa Birliği'nin Covid-19 Yönetimi. *Ekonomi Politika ve Finans Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5, 32-58. <https://doi.org/10.30784/epfad.805320>
- [2] Barbier-Gauchard, A., Dai, M., Mainguy, C., Saadaoui, J., Sidiropoulos, M., Terraz, I., & Trabelsi, J. (2021). Towards a more resilient European Union after the COVID-19 crisis. *Eurasian Economic Review: A Journal in Applied Macroeconomics and Finance*, 11(2), 321. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40822-021-00167-4>
- [3] Beach, D. & Smeets, S. (2020). New Institutional Leadership – how the new European Council-dominated crisis governance paradoxically strengthened the role of EU institutions. *Journal of European Integration*, 42(6), 837-854. DOI: 10.1080/07036337.2019.1703966
- [4] Bongardt, A., & Torres, F. (2020). Lessons From the Coronavirus Crisis for European Integration. *Intereconomics* 55, 130–131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10272-020-0883-3>
- [5] Brooks, E., & Geyer, R. (2020). The development of EU health policy and the Covid-19 pandemic: trends and implications. *Journal of European Integration*, 42(8), 1057-1076. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2020.1853718>
- [6] Camous, A., & Claeys, G. (2020). The evolution of European economic institutions during the COVID-19 crisis. *European Policy Analysis*, 6(2), 328-341. <https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1100>
- [7] Celi, G., Guarascio, D., & Simonazzi, A. (2020). A fragile and divided European Union meets Covid-19: further disintegration or 'Hamiltonian moment'? *Journal of Industrial and Business Economics: Economia e Politica Industriale*, 47(3), 411. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40812-020-00165-8>
- [8] D'Erman, V., Schure, P., & Amy Verdun (2020). Introduction to “Economic and Financial Governance in the European Union after a decade of Economic and Political Crises.”, *Journal of Economic Policy Reform*, 23(3), 267-272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17487870.2020.1762599>
- [9] De Ruijter A., Beetsma R., Burgoon B., Nicoli F. & Vandenbroucke F. (2020). EU solidarity and policy in fighting infectious diseases: state of play, obstacles, citizen preferences and ways forward, Research paper 2020-06, research paper 2020-17, research paper 2020-03, Amsterdam, Amsterdam Centre for European Studies, Amsterdam Law School, Amsterdam Centre for European Law and Governance. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3570550> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3570550>
- [10] Deruelle, T., & Engeli, I. (2021) The COVID-19 crisis and the rise of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). *West European Politics*, 44(5-6), 1376-1400, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1930426>
- [11] Grimmel, A. (2021). “Le Grand absent Européen”: solidarity in the politics of European integration. *Acta Polit*, 56, 242–260. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-020-00171-7>
- [12] Haas, E. (1970). The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorizing. *International Organization*, 24(4), 607-646. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706149>
- [13] Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2019). Grand theories of European integration in the twenty-first century. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(8), 1113-1133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1569711>



- [14] Kassim, H. (2023). The European Commission and the COVID-19 pandemic: a pluri-institutional approach. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 30(4), 612-634. DOI: [10.1080/13501763.2022.2140821](https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2022.2140821)
- [15] Krotz, U., & Schramm, L. (2021). Embedded Bilateralism, Integration Theory, and European Crisis Politics: France, Germany, and the Birth of the EU Corona Recovery Fund. *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 60, 526-545. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13251>
- [16] Ladi, S., & Tsarouhas, D. (2020). EU economic governance and Covid-19: policy learning and windows of opportunity. *Journal of European Integration*, 42(8), 1041-1056. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2020.1852231>
- [17] Ladi, S., & Wolff, S. (2021). The EU Institutional Architecture in the Covid-19 Response: Coordinative Europeanization in Times of Permanent Emergency. *Journal of Common Marketing Studies*, 59, 32-43. doi: [10.1111/jcms.13254](https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13254)
- [18] Lefkofridi, Z., & Schmitter, P. (2015). Transcending or Descending? European Integration in Times of Crisis. *European Political Science Review*, 7(1), 3-22. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773914000046>
- [19] Matthijs, M. (2020). Lessons and learnings from a decade of EU crises. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(8), 1127-1136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2020.1787489>
- [20] Moravcsik, A. (1993). Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 31(4), 473-524.
- [21] Niemann, A., & Ioannou, D. (2015). European economic integration in times of crisis: a case of neofunctionalism? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(2), 196-218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2014.994021>
- [22] Nadezhina, O., Zaretskaya, V., Vertakova, Y., Plotnikov, V., & Burkaltseva, D. (2021). European integration risks in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Technology*, 12(7), 1546-1556. <https://doi.org/10.14716/ijtech.v12i7.5396>
- [23] Rhodes, M. (2021) 'Failing forward': a critique in light of covid-19. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(10), 1537-1554. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2021.1954067>
- [24] Rosamond, B. (2005) The uniting of Europe and the foundation of EU studies: Revisiting the neofunctionalism of Ernst B. Haas. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12(2), 237-254.
- [25] Sapir, A. (2020). Why has COVID-19 hit different European Union economies so differently? Bruegel.
- [26] Schimmelfennig, F. (2015). Liberal intergovernmentalism and the euro area crisis. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(2), 177-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2014.994020>
- [27] Schimmelfennig, F. (2018). European integration (theory) in times of crisis. A comparison of the euro and Schengen crises. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(7), 969-989. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1421252>
- [28] Schmitter, P. (1970). A Revised Theory of Regional Integration. *International Organization*. 24(4), 836-868. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706154>
- [29] Schmitter, P. (2012). European Disintegration? A Way Forward. *Journal of Democracy*, 23(4), 39-48.

- [30] Schramm, L. & Wessels, W. (2022). The European Council as a crisis manager and fusion driver: assessing the EU's fiscal response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of European Integration*, 45(2), 257-273. DOI: [10.1080/07036337.2022.2111418](https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2022.2111418)
- [31] Scipioni, M. (2018). Failing forward in EU migration policy? EU integration after the 2015 asylum and migration crisis. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(9), 1357-1375. DOI: [10.1080/13501763.2017.1325920](https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1325920)
- [32] Sharma, T. (2021). Assessment Of EU' Economic and Health Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic Within the Framework of Liberal Intergovernmentalism And Neofunctionalism Theoretical Approaches. *Journal of Scientific Papers «Social Development and Security»*, 11(1), 131-144. <https://doi.org/10.33445/sds.2021.11.1.14>
- [33] Stockenhuber, R. (2020). Did We Respond Quickly Enough? How Policy-Implementation Speed in Response to COVID-19 Affects the Number of Fatal Cases in Europe. *World Medical & Health Policy*, 12(4), 413-429. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wmh3.374>
- [34] Truchlewski, Z. Schelkle, W., & Ganderson, J. (2021). Buying time for democracies? European Union emergency politics in the time of COVID-19. *West European Politics*, 44 (5-6), 1353-1375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1916723>
- [35] Vilpišauskas, R. (2013). Eurozone Crisis and European Integration: Functional Spillover, Political Spillover? *Journal of European Integration*, 35(3), 361-373. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2013.774785>
- [36] Wolff, S., & Ladi, S. (2020). European Union Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic: adaptability in times of Permanent Emergency. *Journal Of European Integration*, 42(8), 1025–1040. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2020.1853120>

### Online Resources

- [1] Baba, C., Duval, R., Lan, T. & Topalova, P. (2023). The 2020-2022 Inflation Surge Across Europe: A Phillips-Curve-Based Dissection. IMF, 30. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 28 May, 2023, from <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2023/02/10/The-2020-2022-Inflation-Surge-Across-Europe-A-Phillips-Curve-Based-Dissection-529693>
- [2] Blake, P., and Wadhwa, D. (2021). 2020 Year in Review: The impact of COVID-19 in 12 charts. World Bank Blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/2020-year-review-impact-covid-19-12-charts>
- [3] Buelens, C. & Zdarek, V. (2022). Euro area inflation shaped by two years of COVID-19 pandemic. Quarterly Report on the Euro Area (QREA), Directorate General Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN), European Commission, 21(1), 7(20). [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 28 May, 2023, from [https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/ip172\\_en\\_chapter\\_i.pdf](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/ip172_en_chapter_i.pdf)
- [4] Botelho, V., & Neves, P. (2021). The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the euro area labour market for men and women. *Economic Bulletin Boxes, European Central Bank*, 2021(4), 66 – 73. <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/ecbu/eb202104.en.pdf>
- [5] European Central Bank. (2017). Five things you need to know about the Maastricht Treaty. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in March, 2022, from

- [https://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/educational/explainers/tell-me-more/html/25\\_years\\_maastricht.en.html](https://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/educational/explainers/tell-me-more/html/25_years_maastricht.en.html)
- [6] European Central Bank. (2020). ECB announces €750 billion Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP). Press Release, 18 March 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 6 April, 2023, from [https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2020/html/ecb.pr200318\\_1~3949d6f266.en.html](https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2020/html/ecb.pr200318_1~3949d6f266.en.html)
- [7] European Commission. (1991). Convergence criteria for joining. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in May, 2022, from [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/euro-area/enlargement-euro-area/convergence-criteria-joining\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/euro-area/enlargement-euro-area/convergence-criteria-joining_en)
- [8] European Commission. (2020a). Coronavirus: Commission proposes to activate fiscal framework's general escape clause to respond to pandemic. Press Release, 20 March 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in May 2022, from [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_499](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_499)
- [9] European Commission. (2020b). Coronavirus: Commission presents practical guidance to ensure continuous flow of goods across EU via green lanes. Press Release, 23 March 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in May 2022, from [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_510](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_510)
- [10] European Commission. (2020c). Questions and answers: Commissions proposes activating fiscal framework's general escape clause to respond to coronavirus pandemic. Press Release, 20 March 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved on 29 March 2023, from [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_500](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_500)
- [11] European Commission. (2020d). Proposal For A Regulation Of The European Parliament And Of The Council On The Establishment Of A Programme For The Union's Action In The Field Of Health –For The Period 2021-2027 And Repealing Regulation (Eu) No 282/2014 (“Eu4health Programme”). 28 May 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 5 May, 2023, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020PC0405>
- [12] European Commission. (2020e). Recovery and Resilience Facility – Grants allocation per Member State. 28 September 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 16 May, 2023, from [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-02/recovery\\_and\\_resilience\\_facility.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-02/recovery_and_resilience_facility.pdf)
- [13] European Commission. (2020f). Eu's Next Long-Term Budget & Nextgenerationeu: Key Facts And Figures. 11 November 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 05 May, 2023, from [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-11/mff\\_factsheet\\_agreement\\_en\\_web\\_20.11.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2020-11/mff_factsheet_agreement_en_web_20.11.pdf)
- [14] European Commission. (2022a) Timeline of EU Action. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in May, 2022, from [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/timeline-eu-action\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/timeline-eu-action_en)
- [15] European Commission. (2022b) Timeline Of The EU's Health Actions During The Covid-19 Pandemic: Epidemiological Situation - Health Measures - Eu Global Efforts. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in February, 2023, from [https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/covid\\_health\\_response\\_timeline.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-05/covid_health_response_timeline.pdf)
- [16] European Commission. (2022c). Commission finds that Hungary has not progressed enough in its reforms and must meet essential milestones for its Recovery and Resilience funds. Press Release, 30 November 2022. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 10 May, 2023, from [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_7273](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7273)

- [17] European Commission. (n.d.). Sustainable Development Goals. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 03 May, 2023, from [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/sustainable-development-goals\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/sustainable-development-goals_en)
- [18] European Commission, Directorate-General for Budget, (2021). The EU's 2021-2027 long-term budget and NextGenerationEU : facts and figures, Publications Office of the European Union. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 3 May, 2023, from <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2761/808559>
- [19] European Council. (2020a). Joint statement of the members of the European Council, 26 March 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 5 April, 2023, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/43076/26-vc-euco-statement-en.pdf>
- [20] European Council. (2020b). Conclusions of the President of the European Council following the video conference of the members of the European Council, 23 April 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 4 May, 2023, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/04/23/conclusions-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-video-conference-with-members-of-the-european-council-on-23-april-2020/>
- [21] European Council. (2020c). European Council conclusions, 17-21 July 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 10 May, 2023, from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/45109/210720-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf>
- [22] European Court of Auditors. (2020). How the EU took account of lessons learned from the 2008-2012 financial and sovereign debt crises. ECA, (5). [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 28 May, 2023, from [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/RW20\\_05/RW\\_Financial\\_crisis\\_prevention\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/RW20_05/RW_Financial_crisis_prevention_EN.pdf)
- [23] European Investment Bank. (n.d.). Coronavirus outbreak: EIB Group's response. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 15 May 2023, <https://www.eib.org/en/about/initiatives/covid-19-response/index.htm>
- [24] European Parliament. (2000). Lisbon European Council 23 And 24 March 2000 Presidency Conclusions. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 3 May, 2023, from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_en.htm](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm)
- [25] European Union. (2020). Coronavirus Global Respond. 24 April, 2020. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in May, 2022, from [https://global-response.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://global-response.europa.eu/index_en)
- [26] Eurostat. (2023a). GDP and main components (output, expenditure and income). [Data set]. Eurostat. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 10 May, 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/NAMQ\\_10\\_GDP\\_custom\\_77309/bookmark/line?lang=en&bookmarkId=b74febcd-e664-4f22-9c93-2ef510fe371f](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/NAMQ_10_GDP_custom_77309/bookmark/line?lang=en&bookmarkId=b74febcd-e664-4f22-9c93-2ef510fe371f)
- [27] Eurostat. (2023b). Impact of COVID-19 on international trade by Member State. Eurostat. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 16 May, 2023, from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Impact\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_on\\_international\\_trade\\_by\\_Member\\_State#Comparison\\_with\\_the\\_previous\\_year](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Impact_of_COVID-19_on_international_trade_by_Member_State#Comparison_with_the_previous_year)
- [28] Eurostat. (2023c). Impact of COVID-19 on employment income - advanced estimates. Eurostat. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 16 May, 2023, from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Impact\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_on\\_employment\\_income\\_-\\_advanced\\_estimates](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Impact_of_COVID-19_on_employment_income_-_advanced_estimates)

- [29] Eurostat. (2023d). COVID-19 labour effects across the income distribution Eurostat. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 16 May, 2023, from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=COVID-19\\_labour\\_effects\\_across\\_the\\_income\\_distribution&stable=0#A\\_EU\\_level\\_overview](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=COVID-19_labour_effects_across_the_income_distribution&stable=0#A_EU_level_overview)
- [30] Eurostat. (2023e). Consumer prices – inflation. Eurostat. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 16 May, 2023, from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Consumer\\_prices\\_-\\_inflation#Inflation: price changes over time in the European Union](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Consumer_prices_-_inflation#Inflation:_price_changes_over_time_in_the_European_Union)
- [31] Guarascio, F. & Blenkinsop, P. (2020). EU fails to persuade France, Germany to lift coronavirus health gear controls. Reuters. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in May, 2023 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-idUSKBN20T166>
- [32] Hegarty, S. (2020). The Chinese Doctor Who Tried To Warn Others About Coronavirus. BBC News. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in November, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-51364382>
- [33] Herszenhorn, D., & Bayer, L. (2020, July 21). EU leaders agree on €1.82T budget and coronavirus recovery package. Politico. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 8 May, 2023, from <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-leaders-reach-deal-on-coronavirus-recovery-fund/>
- [34] Gill, J., & Chadwick, L. (2020, July 21). EU summit: Leaders reach landmark €1.82 trillion COVID-19 recovery deal and budget. Euronews. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 8 May, 2023, from <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2020/07/21/eu-summit-deadlock-see-talks-stretch-into-sunday>
- [35] Lagarde, C. [@Lagarde]. (2020, March 19) Extraordinary times require extraordinary action. There are no limits to our commitment to the euro. We are determined to use the full potential of our tools, within our mandate [Thumbnail with link attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/Lagarde/status/1240414918966480896>
- [36] Mathieu, E., Ritchie, H. Rodés-Guirao, L., Appel, C., Giattino, C., Hasell, J., Macdonald, B., Dattani, S., Beltekian, D., Ortiz-Ospina, E., & Roser, M. (2020). Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). Our World in Data. [Data set]. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 11 May, 2023, from <https://ourworldindata.org/excess-mortality-covid>
- [37] Nas, Ç. (2020). Koronavirüs Salgınının Yeni Merkez Üssü Avrupa: AB'nin Kriz Yönetimi Sınavı. UİK Panorama. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in May, 2023, from <https://www.uikpanorama.com/blog/2020/03/27/koronavirus-salgininin-yeni-merkez-ussu-avrupa-abnin-kriz-yonetimi-sinavi/>
- [38] Our World in Data. (2023a). Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). Our World in Data. [Data set]. Selected Countries Table. [Data set]. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 11 May, 2023, from <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/excess-mortality-p-scores-projected-baseline?facet=entity&country=ITA~DEU~ESP~GBR~GRC~FRA~NLD~DNK~AUT~USA~SWE~POL>
- [39] Our World in Data. (2023b). Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). Our World in Data. [Data set]. Selected Countries Table. [Data set]. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 11 May, 2023, from [https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/coronavirus-data-explorer?zoomToSelection=true&time=2020-03-01..2020-06-12&facet=none&country=OWID\\_WRL~USA~ITA~ESP~SWE~DEU~POL~DNK~AUT~GBR~FRA~NLD~GRC&pickerSort=asc&pickerMetric=location&hideCo](https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/coronavirus-data-explorer?zoomToSelection=true&time=2020-03-01..2020-06-12&facet=none&country=OWID_WRL~USA~ITA~ESP~SWE~DEU~POL~DNK~AUT~GBR~FRA~NLD~GRC&pickerSort=asc&pickerMetric=location&hideCo)

- ntrols=true&Metric=Case+fatality+rate&Interval=Cumulative&Relative+to+Population=false&Color+by+test+positivity=true
- [40] Rakt, E. and Christl, F. (2020, 7 April). Covid-19 pandemic shows how fragile the EU is. Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Retrieved from <https://tr.boell.org/en/2020/03/31/covid-19-pandemic-shows-how-fragile-eu>
- [41] Rhinard, M. (2020). Assessing the European Union's performance in the Covid-19 pandemic. LSE EUROPP Blog. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 11 May, 2023, from <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2020/03/26/assessing-the-european-unions-performance-in-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- [42] World Bank. (2022). World Development Report 2022: Finance for an Equitable Recovery. Washington, DC: World Bank. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 11 May, 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1730-4>
- [43] WHO. (2023). WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard. [Data set]. [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in May, 2023, from <https://covid19.who.int/>
- [44] Zalc, J. And Maillard R. (2020). Public Opinion In Times of Covid-19. Kantar. A Public Opinion Monitoring Study Report (commissioned by the European Parliament). [ON-LINE]. Retrieved in 11 May, 2023, from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2020/public\\_opinion\\_in\\_the\\_eu\\_in\\_time\\_of\\_coronavirus\\_crisis/report/en-covid19-survey-report.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2020/public_opinion_in_the_eu_in_time_of_coronavirus_crisis/report/en-covid19-survey-report.pdf)

# **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1**

### **THE TREATY OF ROME**

#### **Article 1**

By this Treaty, the HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES establish among themselves a EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY.

#### **Article 2**

The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of Member States, to promote throughout the Community a harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increase in stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of living and closer relations between the States belonging to it.

#### **Article 3**

For the purposes set out in Article 2, the activities of the Community shall include, as provided in this Treaty and in accordance with the timetable set out therein

- (a) the elimination, as between Member States, of customs duties and of quantitative restrictions on the import and export of goods, and of all other measures having equivalent effect;
- (b) the establishment of a common customs tariff and of a common commercial policy towards third countries;

- (c) the abolition, as between Member States, of obstacles to freedom of movement for persons, services and capital;
- (d) the adoption of a common policy in the sphere of agriculture;
- (e) the adoption of a common policy in the sphere of transport;
- (f) the institution of a system ensuring that competition in the common market is not distorted;
- (g) the application of procedures by which the economic policies of Member States can be co-ordinated and disequilibria in their balances of payments remedied;
- (h) the approximation of the laws of Member States to the extent required for the proper functioning of the common market;
- (i) the creation of a European Social Fund in order to improve employment opportunities for workers and to contribute to the raising of their standard of living;
- (j) the establishment of a European Investment Bank to facilitate the economic expansion of the Community by opening up fresh resources;
- (k) the association of the overseas countries and territories in order to increase trade and to promote jointly economic and social development.



## **Appendix 2**

### **TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

#### **Article 36**

**(ex Article 30 TEC)**

The provisions of Articles 34 and 35 shall not preclude prohibitions or restrictions on imports, exports or goods in transit justified on grounds of public morality, public policy or public security; the protection of health and life of humans, animals or plants; the protection of national treasures possessing artistic, historic or archaeological value; or the protection of industrial and commercial property. Such prohibitions or restrictions shall not, however, constitute a means of arbitrary discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade between Member States.

#### **Article 168**

**(ex Article 152 TEC)**

1. A high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Union policies and activities.

Union action, which shall complement national policies, shall be directed towards improving public health, preventing physical and mental illness and diseases, and obviating sources of danger to physical and mental health. Such action shall cover the fight against the major health scourges, by promoting research into their causes, their transmission and their prevention, as well as health information and education, and monitoring, early warning of and combating serious cross-border threats to health.

The Union shall complement the Member States' action in reducing drugs-related health damage, including information and prevention.

2. The Union shall encourage cooperation between the Member States in the areas referred to in this Article and, if necessary, lend support to their action. It shall in

particular encourage cooperation between the Member States to improve the complementarity of their health services in cross-border areas.

Member States shall, in liaison with the Commission, coordinate among themselves their policies and programmes in the areas referred to in paragraph 1. The Commission may, in close contact with the Member States, take any useful initiative to promote such coordination, in particular initiatives aiming at the establishment of guidelines and indicators, the organisation of exchange of best practice, and the preparation of the necessary elements for periodic monitoring and evaluation. The European Parliament shall be kept fully informed.

3. The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of public health.

4. By way of derogation from Article 2(5) and Article 6(a) and in accordance with Article 4(2)(k) the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article through adopting in order to meet common safety concerns:

(a) measures setting high standards of quality and safety of organs and substances of human origin, blood and blood derivatives; these measures shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or introducing more stringent protective measures;

(b) measures in the veterinary and phytosanitary fields which have as their direct objective the protection of public health;

(c) measures setting high standards of quality and safety for medicinal products and devices for medical use.

5. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, may also adopt incentive measures designed to protect and improve human health and in particular to combat the major cross-border health scourges, measures concerning monitoring, early warning of and

combating serious cross-border threats to health, and measures which have as their direct objective the protection of public health regarding tobacco and the abuse of alcohol, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

6. The Council, on a proposal from the Commission, may also adopt recommendations for the purposes set out in this Article.

7. Union action shall respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the definition of their health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. The responsibilities of the Member States shall include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them. The measures referred to in paragraph 4(a) shall not affect national provisions on the donation or medical use of organs and blood.

#### **Article 196**

1. The Union shall encourage cooperation between Member States in order to improve the effectiveness of systems for preventing and protecting against natural or man-made disasters.

Union action shall aim to:

- (a) support and complement Member States' action at national, regional and local level in risk prevention, in preparing their civil-protection personnel and in responding to natural or man-made disasters within the Union;
- (b) promote swift, effective operational cooperation within the Union between national civil-protection services;
- (c) promote consistency in international civil-protection work.

2. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure shall establish the measures necessary to help achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 1, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

# CURRICULUM VITAE

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

**Name – Surname :** ZÜBEYDE ÖZ

**Date of Birth :** 08.06.1989

**Place of Birth :** Elazığ / TÜRKİYE

**Phone :** +90 530 5104662

**E-mail :** zubeyde.oz@outlook.com

## EDUCATION

### Degree Subject – University - Graduation Year

**BA:** Business Administration- TOBB Economy and Technology University 2013

**BA:** International Relations- TOBB Economy and Technology University 2014

**MA** European and International Affairs – Turkish -German University 2023

## PUBLICATIONS

### Master Thesis

Öz, Z. (2023). The Impact Of Covid-19 On The Integration Of The European Union: A Comparison With The Other Crises Of Europe, Advisor Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wessels, 2023

### Articles

Tuzcuoğlu, A., Fayda, S. N., Tunıyazı, Y., & Öz, Z. (2018). Do The Effects Of Brand Personality Dimensions On Brand Loyalty Change According To Consumers? Personalities? Turkish Journal of Marketing, 3(2), 84–107.

<https://doi.org/10.30685/tujom.v3i2.35>

## REFERENCES

Doç. Dr. Melike Meterellioz ([meterellioz@etu.edu.tr](mailto:meterellioz@etu.edu.tr))