

# InDivEU

Integrating Diversity in the European Union

## “The future of European integration”

Panel organised in the framework of the InDivEU project at the TEPSA French Pre-Presidency Conference, 9 December 2021

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

# The FUTURE of EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

PPC DAY 1  
16:15 Integrating Diversity in the European Union

**IVO BELET**  
Cabinet of Dubravka Šuica, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Democracy & demography

**FRANK SCHIMMELFENNIG**  
Center for Comparative and International Studies, ETH Zürich & TEPSA

**DONALD WERTLEN**  
Institute of European Studies and International Relations, Comenius University

Moderated by:  
**OLIVIER COSTA**  
Sciences Po, CEVIPOF, CNRS

TEPSA Trans European Policy Studies Association

SciencesPo SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTES FOR POLITICAL RESEARCH

cnrs

#PPCParis

Integrating Diversity in the European Union

In the framework of the Horizon 2020 project [“InDivEU - Integrating Diversity in the European Union”](#), on 9 December 2021 TEPSA organised a panel on “The Future of European Integration” at its French [Pre-Presidency Conference \(PPC\)](#), held on the occasion of the incoming French Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The PPC is TEPSA’s biannual flagship event, taking place right before the inauguration of each new Council Presidency. Bringing together academics, think tankers, policy makers, media and civil society, the conference aims to discuss the agenda and challenges for the upcoming Presidency and for the EU more broadly. The objective of this panel was to present some of the key challenges for the future of European integration, with a special focus on the role of Differentiated Integration (DI) and the Conference on the Future of Europe.



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Moderated by **Olivier Costa** (Sciences Po, CEVIPOF, CNRS), the panel included contributions by **Frank Schimmelfennig** (InDivEU Scientific Lead, Centre for Comparative and International Studies - ETH Zürich & TEPSA), **Donald Wertlen** (Comenius University Bratislava), and **Ivo Belet**, member of Cabinet of European Commission Vice-President Dubravka Šuica (in charge of democracy and demography).

**Ivo Belet** presented the Conference on the Future of Europe, its nature, ongoing developments and expected outcomes. He explained that the Conference is organised around two innovative processes: 1) citizens' panels with randomly selected participants and 2) plenary sessions where all stakeholders together adopt final recommendations. Mr Belet emphasised that the objective of the Conference is not only to be a deliberative tool, but also - as the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU committed to - the basis for institutional follow-up and change. He further clarified the timeline, expecting the recommendations and the final report to be released under the French Presidency.

Looking at Differentiated Integration (DI) as one of the possible scenarios for the future of Europe (as mentioned in the 2017 White Paper and in President Macron's Sorbonne speech), **Frank Schimmelfennig** noted that the concept does not generate much discussion in the context of the Conference. The concept is absent from communication materials, and the first report featured only few ideas related to DI. This can be explained by a number of factors. First, DI is generally understood as an academic analytical tool, which is hardly relatable as such for the general public. Most importantly, the Conference addresses topics requiring broad, common, and uniform action (i.e. constitutional and redistributive reforms, which are the least suitable for differentiation). He thus concluded that DI could play an important role in the implementation of the Conference's reforms more as a possible remedy for the lack of consensus than as a general strategy.

**Donald Wertlen** presented the views of Slovakia, where the Conference's format and organisation were criticised as neglecting participatory democracy by focusing too much on expert groups. Despite this, two topics of the Conference particularly resonated with the media and the population: Schengen and related challenges (i.e. migration, Brexit, freedom of movement), and the recovery plan. The green transition, according to Mr Wertelen, represents a clear example of high heterogeneity where DI is necessary. While this policy field has been progressively Europeanised towards objectives of greener modes of production, priorities differ in the member states. Indeed, energy is framed in security terms and clear path dependence makes the shift to green energy more costly. Both together hamper the uniform institutionalisation of energy policies at the EU level.





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The presentations were followed by a discussion, which touched upon the expected outcomes of the Conference on the Future of the EU and the possibility for applying DI in a hypothetical Europeanisation of health policies. In their concluding remarks, all panelists reaffirmed the positive political context for discussions on the Future of Europe, with a French Presidency of the Council of the EU led by strong commitments towards EU integration, and a new German governmental coalition with explicit commitments to deepen integration.



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