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In the framework of the upcoming book “Solidarity in Action and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals”, edited by Michael Kaeding, Johannes Pollak and Paul Schmidt, TEPSA co-hosted a debate on **November 26 at 09:30 CET**. The event will focus on Southern Member States’ views on European Solidarity. In partnership with IPRI-NOVA, this event featured contributions from:

- **Alice Cunha**, Research Fellow, IPRI-NOVA,
- **Ignacio Molina**, Senior Analyst, Elcano Royal Institute,
- **Eleonora Poli**, Associate Researcher, Istituto Affari Internazionali,
- **Eugenia Kopsidi**, Resident Lecturer, European Law and Governance School, who appeared in hybrid format,
- **Moderated by: Paul Schmidt**, Secretary-General of ÖGFE and co-editor of “Solidarity in Action and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals”.

Throughout its 35 years of membership, Portugal’s posture has been to be European by all means, thus joining all major EU projects, and remaining committed to this community of shared values, responsibility, solidarity and prosperity. But 2020 has been a unique year full of immediate challenges, and 2021 has been little easier. Has solidarity persisted? Or must we rebuild it?

Spain is a country prone to exploit the idea of solidarity in European debates, although that does not mean that it is always an exemplary Member State in this regard. In his chapter of “Solidarity in Action and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals”, Ignacio Molina elaborates on three key points: that the high political prestige solidarity enjoys at home; that the strong Europeanism of both elites and public opinion, who are willing to advance towards an ever-closer union; and that the widespread self-perception of economic, geographical and even political national weakness. Spain generally tends to show and deliver solidarity in its EU policy, but it also has significant shortcomings. Final recommendations are presented as a conclusion.

The COVID-19 crisis might have been the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back in terms of EU solidarity in Italy. It contributed to fan the flames of the idea, shared by 71% of Italians, that the EU abandons Italy in times of crisis, as it happened during the migration crisis, and that European solidarity is worth only in times of prosperity. In May 2020, 73% of the Italian citizens were convinced that the COVID-19 demonstrated the complete failure of the European Union itself. However, as the paper highlights, Italy has been receiving more solidarity from the EU than what it is providing. In this perspective, the diffused perception that the EU is ineffective and unsupportive, which was already spread before the crisis, is certainly hard but not impossible to change.

Meanwhile in Greece, the appeal to solidarity was brought into question throughout the EU by the refugee crisis, characterised as the worst displacement crisis since World War II. In 2015 and 2016, the large inflows of refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea and arriving at the European borders, led to emotionally charged public declarations of solidarity by both various European institutions and governments and a significant part of civil society. However, as inflows persisted and increased, the European voices that initially encouraged and promoted solidarity were succeeded by a strong political will to safeguard the European borders at all costs.

This event took place in the framework of the upcoming publication of TEPSA’s new book: “Solidarity in Action and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals”, which will focus on solidarity in action and is edited by Michael Kaeding, Johannes Pollak, and Paul Schmidt. Coming soon via [Springer](#).