

Panel Three
EU Studies and New Challenges
14.00-15.30 EET

Chair: Prof. Dr. Maria Stoicheva, Vice-Rector, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

Teaching EU studies in the Post-Pandemic Era

Abstract

What has been the impact so far of COVID-19 on EU studies? How are EU courses responding to these unprecedented new challenges?

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a challenge to the European Union in different fields, from economics to security, to sustainable development. But the main challenge the pandemic crisis posed to the EU is legitimacy. In fact, the most popular discourses during the COVID-19 crisis was (and is): the EU did not act to help its member states in facing health and economic challenges due to the pandemics. The EU is depicted as a battlefield where “frugal and wasteful” member states fight in order to maximise national interests. As a result, the EU risks to be perceived as a “club of elites” with the risk to increase the distance between the EU and its citizens.

Among the main aims of higher education courses on EU studies in times of pandemics are:

- 1) to protect students against misinformation and disinformation actions;
- 2) to provide students with reliable information on the EU activity and initiatives in this specific crisis;
- 3) to discuss on the challenges to the European Union in different fields, from economics, to security, to sustainable development;
- 4) to provide stimuli and theoretical basis for the analysis of the reform the EU needs in order to improve its capabilities to face crises.

Francesca Longo is a PhD doctor in International Relations, a full Professor of Political Science and a Jean Monnet Professor of European Union Public Policies at the University of Catania, Italy. She is the President of the Italian Political Science Association, Convenor of the Standing Group on Organised Crime – European Consortium for Political Research, member of the academic board of the PhD Program on Political Science and Sociology at the School of Advanced Studies, Pisa. Her research interests are focused on the EU migration Policy, EU policy against organised crime and the security policy of the EU. She has been a member of several international research group on the topic of the fight against organised crime and Immigration policy.

Re-thinking higher education in a post-pandemic world

Abstract

Covid-19 has beset the world. This is by far the most challenging crisis we have faced since the Second World War. Global crises offer opportunities to learn lessons, revise attitudes, eliminate inefficiencies, innovate and transform. Accordingly, Covid-19 is a too good, or rather too terrible, chance to miss.

How will Covid-19 affect higher education?

Universities need to speed up innovations, modernise teaching and research methodologies. The immediate short-term challenge is how to make campuses, which are like small towns with a lot of vibrant interactions, safe for all. Universities should first of all enhance their medical services, be ready to test and isolate the infected. Face masks should be made available to all.

Online teaching and webinars will become the new normal, accordingly Universities should make their IT systems fully equipped and ready to visualise lectures and seminars in a distant mode.

Classrooms will need distance sitting and even cubicles. Dormitories need to be reshaped for single occupancy as much as possible.

Universities should get rid of what is burdening and unnecessary, and new technologies can help eliminate paperwork, and unnecessary printing. This will also be good for the environment.

O.P. Jindal Global University announced we will offer 100 jobs to our graduating students this year, so as to reduce the risks our students may face on the job market. We will also increase scholarships.

Dr. Vesselin Popovski, Professor, Vice Dean Law School, Jindal Global University, India. 2004-2014: Senior Academic Officer, United Nations University, Tokyo. 2002-2004: Expert, EU project 'Legal Protection of Individual Rights', Moscow, Russia. 1999-2002: Assistant Professor, Exeter University, UK. Wrote over twenty books and numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals. PhD, King's College London; MSc, London School of Economics. Member of editorial boards of five journals. Contributed to 'The Princeton Principles of Universal Jurisdiction' and 'Responsibility to Protect', Report of International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001).

Double and joint programmers in European Studies in the post-pandemic era: towards blended learning?

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has already changed the way we teach and learn, although it is unclear how long it will last and what the outcomes of the changes that the educational

institutions need to implement will be. In the past years, the European Union has encouraged the academic community to cooperate more, both within the EU and outside of it. In December 2017, the European Council called on '*...strengthening strategic partnerships across the EU between higher education institutions and encouraging the emergence by 2024 of some twenty 'European Universities', consisting in bottom-up networks of universities across the EU which will enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in several EU countries and contribute to the international competitiveness of European universities'* (EC 2017). The main ambition was to create European Universities - transnational alliances that are supposed to become the universities of the future.

Having in mind the current situation several questions arise. How will these transnational universities function in the post-pandemic world? How will one of their flagship projects – joint and double degrees be organised? How will physical mobility be replaced with on-line courses? This is, among others, one of the most pressing issues that both international consortia, as well as European Universities, need to answer very soon.

In this presentation I will address these questions drawing on experience from activities introduced at the Jagiellonian University, Institute of European Studies (double and joint MA programmes) and in the Self-Steering Committee on European Studies within UNA Europa alliance.

Dr Natasza Styczyńska is an assistant professor at the Institute of European Studies of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. Currently, she is a researcher in two H2020 projects: *Populist rebellion against modernity in 21st-century Eastern Europe: neo-traditionalism and neo-feudalism* (POPREBEL) and *EU Differentiation, Dominance and Democracy* (EU3D). Her academic interests include transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe, party politics, nationalism, populism and euroscepticism in the CEE region.

The “European Language + Law” major program at BFSU: Cultivating Goals and Approaches

Abstract

The major program „European Language + Law“ is an achievement of the comprehensive reform of undergraduate teaching at the School of European Languages and Cultures (SELC) of Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), and has been recruiting undergraduate students nationwide since 2019.

Based on the teaching of European languages, the program aims to cultivate students to master a European language, meanwhile to get familiar with international rules and EU law. The courses offered by the program mainly embody the overall framework of the legal system, legal environment and legal culture of the European Union as a whole, and of certain country as well.

Through the study of foreign language courses, students acquire systematic knowledge and language skills, becoming professional at translating and interpreting. More than that, they will have a deeper understanding of the target country and the whole European society and culture through the foreign language courses together with the

core courses in law, meeting the social need for talented people possessing intercultural communicative competence as well.

Dr. Lin Wenshuang is professor of Bulgarian Studies at her alma mater, Beijing Foreign Studies University. She pursued further education at the University of Sofia in Bulgaria, and earned a Ph.D. degree in humanities from the University of Louisville in the USA. She has published a number of papers and translations in international journals. Her work *Bulgarian Nation: Imagining and Re-imagining* examines the fluidity of Bulgarian national identity.

For her dedication to the cultural exchanges between Bulgaria and China, Michail Mikov awarded her a Medal of the Republic Bulgaria National Assembly in 2013. She was also awarded the "Contribution Award for the Communication of Bulgarian Language and Culture" by Krasimir Valchev, Bulgarian Minister of Education and Science in the year of 2019.

Currently she serves as Director of the Center for Bulgarian Studies and Vice Dean of the School of European Languages and Cultures, BFSU.