

ABSTRACTS

Florian Trauner

How to Distribute Refugees in Europe – The Refugee Crisis and the Dispute over a Paradigm Shift in EU Asylum Policy

This article embeds the EU's attempts to reform its asylum policy in the context of the refugee crisis in a more longitudinal analysis. It focuses on the question of how the EU has sought to achieve more solidarity between states with high and others with low numbers of refugees. It is argued that the European Union has not managed to make a paradigm shift in this issue, regardless of the ever-increasing problem pressure. The EU was unable to tackle the 2015 refugee crisis within the existing rationale of EU asylum cooperation. Thus the European Commission is now pushing for a new system of refugee distribution within Europe.

Burkard Steppacher

Swiss European Policy at a Crossroads

The relations between Switzerland and the European Union have not made substantial progress for years. The hitherto ongoing bilateral process has stalled. Switzerland is asking for further bilateral negotiations, if applicable in a new package of agreements (“Bilaterale III”); whereas the European Union points to the necessity of a common institutional framework to ensure the homogeneity of the relationship. The existing bilateral system is extremely complex and difficult due to the multitude of individual agreements. Switzerland's positive vote on an initiative against mass immigration of February 2014 further impedes relations, because it is incompatible with the bilateral agreements on the free movement of persons.

Ingo Take

Political Competition as a Promoter of Legitimacy? Euro Parties in Agonistic Perspective

This article argues that the lack of identification with the European Union by its citizens is more due to the lack of democratic practice than its institutional structure. The former is, according to Chantal Mouffe, marked by disputes about alternative proposals for problem-solving and definitions of the common good and was prevented by the long dominating neoliberal paradigm. The claim of a lack of alternatives of neoliberal concepts despite an obvious increase in crisis phenomena has led to a depoliticization of the public debate and disenchantment of many citizens with regard to European politics. Here, it is argued that a competition about alternative political concepts driven by Europarties will be better suited to increase the interest of EU citizens in European issues, to motivate them for participation and to create stronger identification with the European Union than the attempts made so far on the structural level of the Union. So, instead of focusing all reforming endeavors on the democratization of the European Union, energies should be concentrated on the legal, organizational and material strengthening of Europarties and their internal profile.

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Waldemar Hummer

Implications of the Concessions to the United Kingdom to prevent a Brexit

On 23 June 2016, the British citizens decide about their country's EU membership. In order to gain a majority in favour of the EU membership the British Prime Minister David Cameron negotiated further opt-outs from EU law for Great Britain, in addition to those already existing. At the example of the negotiated British exemption from the objective of 'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe', which numerous observers have dismissed as a solely symbolic concession, the article shows that this in fact constitutes a fundamental turning away from the Jean Monnet Method. If the new exceptional regulations for Great Britain set a precedent among other 'dissatisfied' member states, the article sees the danger of a European integration proceeding not only with different speeds, but also in different directions.