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Reform of the European Union budget as a process of strengthening the European identity. Are Europeans ready for it?

Summary

The condition of EU finances has been the subject of a heated debate in recent years. It concerns several elements of which the most important ones include: the financial crisis, the situation in the Euro zone, the immigration crisis and the recent challenges of Brexit. All these constitute but a few of the current problems that may decide of the future of the European Union. Despite certain obvious mistakes made during the unification process, the United Europe concept has been a success. However, as it seems, at some point the ideas or ideology overshadowed the essence of effective European structures being built. Particular interests of individual member states prevailed and the values that guided the foundation fathers got been marginalised. An example here may be the EU general budget which was intended to serve as an instrument with which EU ideas and values were to be achieved. Unfortunately, the multiplying exemptions and exceptions to the rule and the granting of privileges to individual Member States have led to a situation where questions such as “who contributed more” and “who gave less” dominated every discussion undertaken. The idea of the principle of solidarity and structural funds aimed to level off differences between states and regions vanished and the value added created by budgetary expenses remained unrecognised. Also, the anti-immigration attitudes, and the slowly departure from European values upon which united Europe was built created a situation in which the European identity has become somewhat obscure. However, not all has been lost altogether but it is necessary to implement some substantial changes that would bring back European features to Europe and help it to maintain its position in the contemporary world. One of the instruments that might serve to achieve this goal is the general budget although its structure and mechanisms must be reformed, likewise the EU institutions themselves.

Keywords: The EU budget – the European Union – European identity – value added – reforms