



## Re-Imagining the European Union

### ACELG's Annual Conference 2017

10 November 2017, University of Amsterdam

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Organized by the [Amsterdam Centre for European Law and Governance](#)

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Has European integration gone too far? Can it be contained without unravelling the whole Union? Can the EU back off without becoming dysfunctional or irrelevant?

The Union's 60th birthday is overshadowed by Brexit negotiations and instead of grand celebrations fundamental questions of the EU's added value and sustainability loom large in the debate. Disenchantment with European integration is omnipresent. Across Europe, euro-critical parties, such as Wilders' PVV, Le Pen's Front National and the AfD, have gained a prominent voice in political debates and tap into the dissatisfaction of large parts of the population with the state of affairs in the EU. The Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe acknowledged in March 2017 that "many Europeans consider the Union as either too distant or too interfering in their day-to-day lives." Two of the five scenarios for Europe's future propose that the EU will do less rather than more in order to respond to Europe's challenges. At 60, the EU's primary task may therefore not be to continue its path towards "an ever closer union", but rather to ask whether the extent of integration has become too intrusive and to see where the EU can and should do less.

This conference aims at providing pointers towards addressing this challenge. It focuses on the questions of whether the EU's powers should and could be contained and how existing discontent with the European project should and could be addressed – both without triggering disintegration of the European *acquis*. To answer this question, the conference includes three sessions focusing each on a distinct European policy area that has given rise to particularly prominent concerns, EU Trade Policies, Monetary Union and EU Internal Market and Social Concerns.

Each session will last 1.5 hour (2 presenters & 1 discussant).

## Setup and sessions

09.00 – 09.10 **Opening**

09.10 – 10.00 **Keynote presentation**

Dieter Grimm, former Justice of the German Federal Constitutional Court, Professor emeritus Humboldt University Berlin, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (confirmed)

10.00 – 11.30: **Session 1 – Making the New Generation Trade Agreements Work For Rather Than Against the EU**

*Large trade agreements such as CETA and TTIP are widely criticised for promoting unfettered free trade at the expense of the environment, social issues and democracy. Rather than seeing free trade as a tide that lifts all boats, critics associate free trade with rising inequality and increased economic insecurity for the many losers of globalisation. It raises the question of how unwanted collateral effects of large trade agreements can be tackled and whether that would require any changes to current EU law.*

**Speakers:**

Harm Schepel, Professor in Economic Law, University of Kent

Panos Delimatsis, Professor EU and International Trade Law, Tilburg University

**Discussant:**

Christina Eckes, Professor of European Law, ACELG

11.30 – 11.50 Coffee break

11.50 – 13.20 **Session 2 – The Future of EMU: Towards a Fiscal and Democratic Union**

*Faced with a simmering sovereign debt crisis ever since 2010, the EU has taken significant steps to strengthen the monetary union. The EU has set up a permanent mechanism for financial assistance, adopted several legislative measures to strengthen budgetary discipline and economic coordination, and set up a full-fledged Banking Union. Yet, according to several economists, political scientists and legal scholars, these measures still fail to make the monetary union economically viable, socially just or democratically legitimate. Several politicians favour a break-up of the euro-zone, a call supported more recently by Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz. This session deals with the future of the Euro and addresses pressing concerns about Europe's currency and possible ways to improve its current set-up.*

**Speakers:**

Mark Dawson, Professor of European Law and Governance, Hertie School of Governance, Berlin

Amy Verdun, Professor of Political Science, University of Victoria, Canada

**Discussant:**

Nik de Boer, Postdoctoral Researcher, ACELG

13.20 – 14.30 Lunch break

14.30 – 16:00 **Session 3 – How Social Should the Internal Market Be?**

*Tying in with the negative discourse about trade and globalisation, many argue that Europe's internal market has been very beneficial for Europe's mobile and successful citizens, but has done too little for those less mobile and less successful. For the latter, the internal market is perceived more as a threat to their job and security than as an opportunity. Dissatisfaction with free movement of workers also played an important role in the Brexit referendum. Critics have argued that Europe's openness too often subordinates social concerns to free market considerations. The third session of the conference concentrates on the EU's internal market and its social dimension. It examines whether the EU's internal market law should be changed to better accommodate its social and redistributive impact in the Member States.*

**Speakers:**

Aukje van Hoek, Professor of Private Law, University of Amsterdam

Gareth Davies, Professor in European Law, VU University Amsterdam

**Discussant:**

Annette Schrauwen, Professor of European Integration, ACELG

16:00 – 16.15 **Wrap up**

16.15 Drinks