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GARCÍA GARCÍA, MARÍA JESÚS (ED.): DEMOCRACIA EUROPEA Y MERCADO ÚNICO: 30 AÑOS DEL TRATADO DE MAASTRICHT, FONDO EDITORIAL ARANZADI, 2024 / Sára Kiššová

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The reviewed book *"Democracia europea y mercado único: 30 años del Tratado De Maastricht"* consist of two parts. The book is an enriching experience for the reader who, in the first part, reads about the impact of the Maastricht Treaty on the strengthening of democracy in the European Union (**the EU**) and, at the same time, moves into the area of the single market from an environmental and social perspective. The reader will thus explore the impact of the Maastricht Treaty throughout EU law.

In the first part of the book there are 7 chapters, all dealing with democracy, from different perspectives. The reader has thus the opportunity to explore the authors' views on democracy and sovereignty, democracy and values, democracy and EU citizenship, or democracy and the European Parliament. Second part of the book is focused on single market from different points of views from environmental issues to business human rights.

In **the first chapter**, Ennio Triggiani addresses the evolving concept of sovereignty within the EU, advocating for deeper integration and stronger democratic legitimacy in response to global challenges. The chapter highlights the EU's achievements and shortcomings, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and environmental issues, calling for more ambitious and cohesive policies in defence and energy to enhance the Union's effectiveness and autonomy. Triggiani further discusses the EU's need to decide whether to remain a secondary player in international affairs or assert a stronger role through significant reforms, potentially including a new treaty. He highlights the Conference on the Future of Europe as a step towards participatory democracy, identifies criticisms of the current institutional setup, particularly the unanimity requirement, and emphasises the importance of simplifying the

EU's institutional architecture, enhancing transparency and accountability, and reassessing the distribution of powers between the EU and Member States. However, as a political obstacle to achieving wider sovereign cooperation, Triggiani sees the fact that sovereignty is closely tied to the unified identity of the people who determine it and are subject to it (Triggiani, 2023).

In **the second chapter**, Ondrej Blažo explores the evolution of the EU's "founding values", noting their formal establishment in the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, despite the EU being founded earlier by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. It highlights how these values became a critical focus amid political tensions in Hungary, leading to legal measures under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union. The article explores the legislative and constitutional significance of defining these values, their integration into EU law, and their implications for European identity and legal coherence across member states. Despite terminology changes from "principles" to "values," he argues that these fundamental ideals have consistently shaped the EU's identity. The author concludes that the EU has always been a union of values since its founding, and these principles remain central to its existence and identity (Blažo, 2023).

In **the third chapter**, María Jesús García García discusses and points out how is the EU's governance system a unique democracy combining citizens and states, ensuring democratic values, political organisation, and citizen participation the EU electoral system, however the lack of a uniform electoral procedure complicates this system. She argues that strengthening EU democracy is crucial for the union's future, demanding both institutional reforms and greater citizen-public authority interaction (García García, 2023a).

María Torres Pérez picks up the previous chapter and in **the fourth chapter** examines the evolution of the European Parliament and current reform proposals to ensure that democratic values remain central to its functions. For this purpose, she analyses the proposal for a Council Regulation on the direct universal suffrage for the election of the Members of the European Parliament in 2022 (Torres Pérez, 2023).

In **the fifth chapter**, Ángela María Romito focuses on the development and significance of European citizenship, introduced by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, and elaborates on the various participatory tools and initiatives (ECI and CoFoE) aimed at enhancing citizen involvement in the EU's democratic processes. She argues that active citizenship is essential for deepening European integration and strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the EU, however despite various participatory tools and initiatives, citizen involvement remains limited and often ineffective. The development of a European identity is seen by her as a gradual cultural process that relies heavily on civic engagement and participatory practices. She proposes new mechanisms, such as citizen assemblies and more accessible and impactful consultations to improve citizen participation (Romito, 2023).

In **the sixth chapter**, the protection of human right in the EU is discussed by Estrella del Valle Calzada. This chapter delves into the complex journey of integrating human rights into the framework of the EU. Initially, the EU's foundational treaties, focused on economic and commercial cooperation, lacked explicit human rights provisions. However, the chapter highlights the gradual shift towards a more robust human rights agenda, catalysed by judicial interpretations and the influence of the European Convention on Human Rights. In this chapter, the authors examine the EU's current efforts to regulate business activities concerning human rights and sustainability, following years of regulatory stagnation. The author thus provides thoughts on a proposed Directive that imposes corporate due diligence obligations in sustainability for companies operating within the EU's territory. The author concludes by stressing the

need for the EU to strengthen its leadership in human rights, invoking the spirit of Maastricht, amidst ongoing criticisms of its policies (del Valle Calzada, 2023).

With **the seventh chapter** Muriel Rouyer concludes the first part of book. He explores Europe's move towards political union, notably during the Maastricht negotiations in the early 1990s, driven by economic needs post-Cold War. He discusses how leaders, inspired by economic imperatives and the need for stability post-Cold War, moved towards deeper integration, notably through the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) but also, he critiques the imposition of Western liberal values on Eastern Europe, leading to socio-economic challenges and the rise of populism (Rouyer, 2023).

Second part of the book is introduced with **the eight chapter** written by Kaloyan Simeonov who discusses the status of the euro as the single currency within the EU, thirty years after the Maastricht Treaty came into force. He highlights that despite advancements, seven EU member states remain outside the Euro Area, representing a significant portion of the EU's population and GDP. The article explores the implications of Brexit and Croatia's adoption of the euro on the Euro Area's consolidation. Additionally, it reviews current economic and financial reforms, emphasising their focus on the Euro Area and the remaining steps needed for the euro to become the unified currency of the entire EU-27 Single Market (Simeonov, 2023).

In the **ninth chapter**, Gabriel Moreno González discusses the development of the social state in post-World War II Europe within the framework of constitutional democracy thought fragmented political model and a competitive economic model. The author discusses the concept of a fragmented political model, particularly through the lens of James Buchanan's Constitutional Economics and Public Choice theory and illustrates how this theory applies to the European integration project, where member states have ceded sovereign powers to create a single market, reducing barriers but also limiting strong political interventions. He also points to the competitive economic model which found a strong foothold in the European integration process, shaping the EU's market and competition laws, state aid prohibitions, and principles like mutual recognition (González, 2023).

Chapter ten is written once again by María Jesús García García. She discusses the EU's efforts to integrate social objectives into its policies, highlighting both achievements and limitations. The EU has made gradual progress in this area, mainly through the regulation of Services of General Economic Interest (SGEIs), such as electricity and telecommunications, which allow member states to ensure public access to essential services. However, the EU's impact is constrained by its limited direct competencies in social matters, relying heavily on supportive roles and non-binding recommendations like the European Pillar of Social Rights (García García, 2023b).

Chapter eleven is written by Francisco Gabriel Villalba Clemente. This chapter focuses on the evolution of environmental policies within the EU, starting from the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, which recognised environmental activity as a genuine "environmental policy," up to the approval of the European Green Deal. It traces how environmental concerns shifted from community action in the 1970s to becoming integral EU policies, influenced by the transition towards a circular economy. The chapter also discusses the Cardiff Process and a 1998 Commission communication on integrating environmental considerations into all EU policies and also examines the EU's path towards sustainable development and climate neutrality by 2050 (Villalba Clemente, 2023).

In **the chapter twelve**, María Jesús García García focused on environmental competences after the Maastricht Treaty. She concludes that while international environmental law establishes crucial principles and standards, their enforcement and

effectiveness heavily rely on regional and national legal systems, with the EU serving as a pivotal bridge between global environmental goals and local enforcement (García García, 2023c).

Chapter thirteen is about the principle of proportionality in restricting European economic freedoms and is written by Clàudia Gimeno Fernández. She analysis of how the principle of proportionality operates within the EU 's legal framework, particularly concerning restrictions on the freedoms of the internal market, and its significance in safeguarding both European integration and national interests (Gimeno Fernández, 2023).

The book is enclosed with **the chapter fourteen** written by Clara Portela who explores the EU's international influence derived from its economic might, focusing on the conditionality it imposes on its trade relations. Specifically, it examines the EU's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), a unilateral tool that integrates trade and development goals with the promotion of human rights, labour standards, and sustainable development. The chapter traces the evolution of political conditionality attached to EU trade preferences from inception to the present, highlighting current controversies and transformations within European institutions (Portela, 2023).

The book under review is a very enriching reading that does not strictly stick solely to the EU constitutional law or solely to the single market in the two separate parts of the book but provides the reader with a cross-section of the themes that the authors explore in relation to the Maastricht Treaty. As the book is published to mark the 30th anniversary of the signing of this landmark treaty, I have to say that the book is an interesting celebration of this milestone. The book offers a wide range of topics that address not only the strictly legal aspects of what has happened since the Maastricht Treaty but also offer the reader other sociological and politological perspectives. By including 14 contributions that analyse the topics in depth, using recent literature and jurisprudence, the reader is enriched with up-to-date perspectives and ideas on EU values, sovereignty EU citizenship. Second part provides the same interesting perspectives and ideas on the single market, however not only from a social and economic point of view, but also, for example, with regard to issues of proportionality and national identity.

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