

# BUILDING EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY IN TIME OF CRISIS

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## **Abstract**

*Solidarity, a principle embedded by the United Nations and later at European level in the treaties of the European Union, is frequently used in the discourse of states, international organizations and citizens, especially in the light of events in recent years. It is currently a widely debated topic from a theoretical and practical perspective, also presupposing taking a series of measures comprising those that the European Union has understood to analyse, develop and apply with reference to the crisis generated by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. In the light of these events, the present article seeks to analyse in a concise manner the management and the implementation of the measures taken regarding the starting point of this crisis. It highlights the already existing premises in the history of the European Union that have generated the need for solidarity, but pointing out the uniqueness generated by this health crisis. The conclusions drawn from this analysis refer to the need for international and intra-EU cooperation through the development of public policies that ensure a sustainable and inclusive recovery, bearing the imprint of solidarity, equality between states and the protection of human rights, as well as providing support from all European Union citizens in order to build practical foundations for the principle of solidarity, not just theoretical ones, so as to ensure a much more efficient and quick response to possible new crises.*

**Key Words:** *European Union, principles, mechanisms, measures, human.*

**JEL Classification:** [K38]

## **1. Introduction**

International solidarity is a set of actions and attitudes, which consider existing inequalities or injustices between countries or between countries and entities in other countries, or between individuals in other countries, trying to understand these aspects in order to, where appropriate, solve or combat them together. Simultaneously "in the context of globalization and the challenge of growing inequalities, strengthening international solidarity is indispensable" being

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appreciated as "one of the fundamental values of international relations in the 21st century".<sup>1</sup>

International cooperation is fundamental to the emergence and evolution of international organizations, of the Member States themselves. Therefore, the development of cooperation relations in Europe, immediately after the Second World War, brought to the forefront the activity of international and regional organizations (in particular), such as the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe, the Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but also the European Union.

The United Nations (UN) is considered as the place where solidarity translates into global action, showing that "COVID-19 is both a wake-up call to a struggling world and a dress rehearsal for future global challenges that must be tackled through multilateral action. We cannot respond to this crisis by going back to what was, or withdrawing into national shells, emphasizing that solidarity is self-interest and that everyone loses if nations fail to grasp that fact"<sup>2</sup>. We mention that the UN General Assembly declared by Resolution 60/209/2005, December 20 the International Day of Solidarity, and by Resolution 57/265/2002 a World Solidarity Fund was established, "in February 2003 as a trust fund developed within the United Nations Development Program", which aims "to eradicate poverty and promote human and social development in developing countries, especially among the poorest segments of their population"<sup>3</sup>. Of course, the goals of sustainable development mentioned in the UN 2030 Agenda must also be mentioned, as they are fully in line with human solidarity, which is based on a spirit of enhanced global solidarity.

More than 70 years after the adoption of the Marshall Plan - a plan for the economic recovery of European states, launched by the United States, it can be said that it is "one of the most successful examples of the history of vision and solidarity and international collaboration"<sup>4</sup>. Its administration was followed by the "establishment of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OECD) in 1948, later transformed in 1961 into the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has been "working with governments for decades to promote international cooperation and improve economic and social policies". All this shows that today's states, international organizations and each individual

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see <https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-solidarity-day>, accessed at 12.04.2021.

<sup>2</sup> António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, addressing the start of the general debate, Heeding COVID-19 'Wake-Up Call', General Assembly Urges Collective Action to Tackle Global Crises, Marks Seventy-Fifth Year of United Nations.

<sup>3</sup> For more information see <https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-solidarity-day>, accessed at 12.04.2021.

<sup>4</sup> Statement from the OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría on the 70th Anniversary of the Marshall Plan available at <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/statement-from-the-oecd-secretary-general-angel-gurria-on-the-70th-anniversary-of-the-marshall-plan.htm>, accessed on 10.04.2021.

are characterized by globalism, inclusion, solidarity and pluralism. Addressing the problems facing all humanity demonstrates that “no solution will come in isolation” but in contrast, it must be addressed collectively, “through a more inclusive, rule-based globalization that works for all”<sup>1</sup>. We agree that “solidarity, ambition and international cooperation have inspired the development of the Marshall Plan and the creation of the OECD. Today, perhaps more than ever in the last sixty years, the world must once again draw inspiration from those values, as it faces the worst health, economic and social crisis since World War II”<sup>2</sup>.

The European Union, a factor in the stability of the European continent, complements the history of Europe over the last 75 years, a history closely linked not only to the end of World War II but also to the efforts of states to participate in strengthening the awareness regarding European solidarity, at the international and regional level as to ensure good cooperation. In addition to this statement, we cannot ignore the fact that “on May 9, 1950, the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, in his statement to the international press, considered that Europe would not be made all of a sudden, nor in an overall construction, it would be made through concrete achievements, first creating a *de facto* solidarity”. (Moroianu Zlătescu, I. & Marinică, C.E., 2020)

*Why the need for solidarity between Member States?* The answer may be the difficulty of addressing and resolving the problems that state face individually, the need for cooperation, mutual support and unity, and the events of recent years have shown that solidarity is a key word. Solidarity among the Member States that will cooperate must be based on the mobilization of all policies, mechanisms and instruments currently available to the European Union.

The various crises that have affected the European Union “have put the idea of European solidarity under stress. This is true with regard to the economic and financial crisis that has severely hit many European countries since 2008, even though the European Union has developed a number of policy measures (e.g., the ‘European Financial Stability Facility’, the ‘European Stability Mechanism’, and the ‘Stability and Growth Pact’)”. (Lahusen, C. & Grasso T., M., 2018) In addition to these moments of crisis, Brexit and the health crisis generated by the SARS-COV2 pandemic are some of the most recent milestones in the history of the European Union crisis.

In view of the above, this article analyses the concept of “European solidarity” in times of crisis, from a legislative perspective, as well as from a practical point of view, following the events<sup>3</sup> of the recent period the European Union has faced and the impact it has had on the Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>2</sup> *Opinion: A multilateral agenda for a strong, resilient, green and inclusive recovery from COVID-19* available at <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/a-multilateral-agenda-for-a-strong-resilient-green-and-inclusive-recovery-from-covid-19-opinion-article-by-pedro-sanchez-and-angel-gurria.htm>, accessed at 10.04.2021.

<sup>3</sup> The refugee crisis, the Brexit phenomenon, the SARS-COV2 pandemic etc.

## 2. European solidarity – the legislative framework

This section examines solidarity as it appears in the European Treaties and in the derived legislation, supplemented by the solidarity clause, with the mechanisms and instruments created to ensure their concrete observance and implementation. So "solidarity appears in the legal framework of the European Union having a major importance in European society. Although there is no definition of solidarity, it appears as a fundamental value and a principle" (Moroianu Zlătescu, I. & Bucur-Ioan, A., 2020).

Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union states that the fundamental values of the European Union<sup>1</sup> represent values common to the Member States "in a society characterized by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men"<sup>2</sup>.

At the same time, the European Union promotes solidarity between generations, economic, social and territorial cohesion, as well as solidarity between Member States. At the same time, Article 24 (2) of the Treaty on European Union states that the European Union in matters of common foreign and security policy is based on the development of mutual political solidarity between Member States and promotes the same in its relations with the rest of the international community - solidarity and mutual respect between peoples. The Lisbon Treaty also provides for the solidarity clause between Member States, and being aired with the principle of solidarity makes up the primary legislative framework of the European Union, taking into consideration that "recently, the European Union faces various crises situations. the concepts of European cohesion and solidarity, including their applicability"; solidarity is found in the external relations of the European Union, especially in the area of the Brexit phenomenon so its approach was and is one characterized by solidarity and, last but not least, in the area of the pandemic crisis generated by SARS-VOC2 where it may have had the the most visible and powerful reverberations. Articles 122 and 194 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) address the principle of solidarity in the economic field, namely, through the energy policy, establishing the functioning of the internal market and from the perspective of the need to preserve and improve the quality of the environment. Article 168 TFEU emphasizes that the Union ensures a high degree of protection concerning health, which is why it complements national public policies, considering the fight against major epidemics, encouraging "research into their causes, transmission and prevention and health information and education, as well as monitoring, alerting and combating serious cross-border health threats".

In art. Article 222 TFEU it is also mentioned a solidarity clause by which "the Union and its Member States shall act jointly, in a spirit of solidarity, in the event

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<sup>1</sup> Respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

<sup>2</sup> Article 2 para. (2) of the Treaty on European Union.

of a terrorist attack or a natural or constructed disaster of man”. Thus, the Union will mobilize all the instruments to assist a Member State in its territory at the request of its political authorities<sup>1</sup>, but also in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. Where the Member State is the victim of a natural or man-made disaster, the other Member States shall assist it, the respective Member States shall be coordinated within the Council. Moreover, Article 222 is the premise for adopting Regulation (EU) No 661/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 amending Regulation (EC) No 882/2004. 2012/2002 of the Council establishing the European Union Solidarity Fund<sup>2</sup>, for ”the Union to have at its disposal a viable and flexible tool to demonstrate its solidarity, send an unequivocal political signal and provide real support to citizens affected by major natural disasters with serious repercussions on economic and social development”.

Of course, the creation and functioning of the Schengen area also characterize the unity and solidarity of the EU Member States, given that "the Schengen area is an emblem of the unity and solidarity of the Member States in the European Union, a vote of trust for the security of the Member States but also an affirmation of some of the fundamental values that underlie the European construction. [...] One of the most appreciated rights of European citizens, free movement has an essential and significant value on the one hand, in terms of its quality as an individual right of every European citizen but also in terms of the common general interest of the EU to give its citizens the widest possible mobility and the crossing of borders in the simplest possible way”. (Moroianu Zlătescu, I. & Marinică, C.E., 2018)

The European Solidarity Corps should also be mentioned<sup>3</sup>, in its preamble referring to solidarity as “one of the universal values on which the Union is built. This common value guides the Union's actions and gives it the unity it needs to meet the challenges of the current and future society, to which young Europeans are willing to contribute, expressing solidarity in practice. Solidarity also stimulates young people's interest in the common European project”<sup>4</sup>. The European Solidarity Corps is a program of action proposed by the Union, which is the foundation for “positive changes in society by providing support to communities of individuals and entities committed to strengthening solidarity throughout Europe”<sup>5</sup>; at the same time it is an instrument for financing the Union's actions.

In the opinion of some authors” (Napoli & Russo, 2018), there is also a vertical dimension of solidarity, this being ”focused on relationships, on the one hand, between the EU and its member states, and, on the other, between the EU and

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<sup>1</sup> In the event of a terrorist attack.

<sup>2</sup> Published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 189 of 27.06.2014.

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1475 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 establishing the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and amending Regulation (EU) no. 1288/2013, of Regulation (EU) no. 1293/2013 and Decision no. 1313/2013 / EU published in the Official Journal of the European Union no. 250 from 04.10.2018.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

individuals. The latter also entails an infra-individual form of solidarity, addressed by EU Law. Vertical solidarity as a whole has been developed through European instruments protecting human rights, based on member states' common constitutional traditions, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and, ultimately, the EU Charter on fundamental rights (hereinafter also the "EU Charter").

The same authors consider that "the European vertical dimension of solidarity has been progressively based on the promotion of the Union and adherence to human rights principles. In this sense, one of the most important tools for the vertical promotion of solidarity in European society is the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union" (Napoli & Russo, 2018). The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union implies the establishment of a double system of protection of fundamental rights at European level, offering value to European Union law, transparency and legal certainty. In addition, Title IV of the Charter concerns solidarity (art. 27-38).

Before major impact events triggering crises for the European Union occurred (e.g. Brexit, the health crisis caused by the SARS-VOC2 virus), it is necessary to recall the adoption of another legislative act, in the category of secondary law, namely *Regulation (EU) 2018 / 1475 of the European Parliament and of the Council of October 2, 2018 establishing the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and amending Regulation (EU) no. 1288/2013, of Regulation (EU) no. 1293/2013 and of Decision no. 1313/2013 / EU*, which defines solidarity as "a sense of responsibility that each person has toward all others and that determines him to get involved in the achievement of the common good, which is expressed through concrete actions, without expecting anything in return"<sup>1</sup>. The regulation establishes the creation of a European Solidarity Corps - an instrument for financing the actions of the European Union and a source of inspiration for a greater spirit of solidarity in Europe, which generates "positive changes in society by providing support to communities of people and entities committed to strengthening solidarity throughout Europe"<sup>2</sup>.

Recent events generating the need for solidarity and cohesion, both between EU Member States and between European citizens, have led the European Union institutions to respond to serious health threats, following the crisis caused by the SARS-VOC2 virus by strengthening their adopted measure, protection mechanisms, etc. Whether it is a natural disaster or a pandemic, these threats have shown that solidarity between Member States is needed more than ever. The European Commission and the European Parliament have worked hard to make the

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<sup>1</sup> The preamble, paragraph 4, of Regulation (EU) 2018/1475 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 establishing the legal framework of the European Solidarity Corps and amending Regulation (EU) No 1095/2010 1288/2013, of Regulation (EU) no. 1293/2013 and of Decision no. 1313/2013 / EU published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 250 of 04.10.2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, paragraph 6.

European Union's response to such situations faster and more effective. Thus, in the European Parliament Resolution of 19 June 2020 on the situation in the Schengen area following the COVID-19 epidemic, in paragraph 17, “it is considered that, in the medium term, it is necessary to reflect on Member States and to ensure that the Union's legislative instruments provide for truly European governance of the Schengen area, which would allow for an effective and coordinated European response to challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, while maintaining the right to free movement and the principle of the absence of internal border controls, which is at the heart of the Schengen project, appreciated by EU citizens; calls for a Commission proposal to reform Schengen governance in the light of the new challenges”.

Whereas “there have been many situations in which Member States have benefited from EU assistance, which have involved, inter alia, the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which has intervened in support of facilitating the repatriation of citizens, when borders are closed and only when the Centre of response to emergencies considered that there is no more favourable solution. Thus, an impressive number of states have requested assistance from the Civil Protection Mechanism for the repatriation of citizens from different countries and not only from the EU (e.g. China, USA, etc.), which can be activated by any other state in the world, including certain international organizations” (Marinică, C.E., 2020). Also within this mechanism was created the “rescEU component, designed as a last resort, component of risk management in case of disasters” (Marinică, C.E., 2020), but also for managing of emerging risks, which was adjusted to include stocks of medical equipment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 90% of which are funded by the EU.

We believe that as it results/is evident from the primary and secondary law of the European Union, solidarity must govern the policies of the European Union, especially since, like other concepts, principles and values of the Union, it sometimes creates legal consequences.

### **3. Solidarity – practical aspects**

Voices claim that “the various crises affecting the European Union are putting European solidarity under strain. In times of economic growth and optimistic economic outlook, it should be easier to profess cooperation and help, while solidarity seems to be much more difficult to sustain in times of recession and scarcity” (Lahusen, C. & Grasso T., M., 2018).

We agree with the statement that “the COVID-19 pandemic has left no country or region untouched. As we continue to fight the virus and prepare for the recovery, our efforts at home need to be complemented with an equally decisive and ambitious response through international cooperation. This crisis must be an opportunity, a turning point, for reinforced and more effective multilateralism. We need to work together to develop effective global solutions for today’s global

challenges: the COVID-19 recovery, climate change, biodiversity loss, growing inequalities, the concentration of wealth, digitalization, or the future of work<sup>1</sup>.

In response to the need for solidarity, the European Union has launched *European Solidarity Tracker* of ECFR, a new interactive tool that provides an opportunity to see how Europeans have supported each other, in various ways, from the provision of medical supplies and staff, to the reception of COVID-19 patients for treatment in other Member States, to financial and political support. Solidarity was also manifested in relation to the situation of migrants, given the increase in specific vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees, more precisely the increase in the risk of infection for them in the context of poor sanitation.

The European Parliament also considers that Europe needs long-term recovery and reconstruction measures, through existing EU funds and financial instruments, proposing the establishment of a European Solidarity Fund for Corona virus, worth at least 50 billion EUR, which should support "the financial efforts of the health sector in all Member States in the current crisis period, as well as post-crisis investment in the health sector, to make health systems more resilient and more focused on those that need support the most"<sup>2</sup>. The Parliament also proposes the creation of a European health response mechanism to respond more effectively and in a coordinated way in case of future health crises. In the next period "The Parliament is expected to debate and vote on the final agreement on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Here, Covid-19 has highlighted the limits of what Member States can do alone, especially in situations that involve crossing borders, and consequently the need for better EU preparedness to tackle natural and artificial disasters. Parliament has ensured that, of the €3.319 billion allocated, civil protection, prevention, preparedness and response to disaster measures are prioritized". Thus, "with such emergency solidarity funding probably under pressure due to the pandemic, Parliament is expected to vote [...] on formal adoption of a proposal widening eligibility to include victims of restructuring and the Covid-19 crisis and speeding up allocation of funds. With a maximum annual allocation of €186 million (outside the MFF), the fund will be renamed the European Fund for Transition"<sup>3</sup>.

Until now, significant sums of money have been allocated from the European Union budget for the civil protection mechanism (approximately 3.2 billion Euro

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<sup>1</sup> *Opinion: A multilateral agenda for a strong, resilient, green and inclusive recovery from COVID-19* available at <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/a-multilateral-agenda-for-a-strong-resilient-green-and-inclusive-recovery-from-covid-19-opinion-article-by-pedro-sanchez-and-angel-gurria.htm>, accessed at 10.04.2021.

<sup>2</sup> For more information see *COVID-19: MEPs are calling for a recovery package and a Coronavirus Solidarity Fund* available at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/press-room/20200415IPR77109/deputatii-solicita-un-pachet-de-masuri-de-redresare-si-un-fond-de-solidaritate>, accessed on 10.04.2021.

<sup>3</sup> *European Parliament Plenary Session – April 2021*, posted on <https://epthinktank.eu/2021/04/23/european-parliament-plenary-session-april-2021/>, accessed at 23.04.2021.



for the period 2021-2027), almost five times more than has been allocated in the last seven years. The civil protection mechanism was also used to repatriate more than 90,000 EU citizens during the Corona virus pandemic, to send medical equipment where it was needed, so that no EU state would have to deal on its own with one major disaster.

Obviously, the European Union is actively contributing to a broader global response, fully committing itself to the fight against the global COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating responsibility and solidarity with those most affected by the pandemic. Thus, the states around the world and the president of the European Council, Charles Michel, pleaded on March 30, 2021 for a new international treaty on pandemic situation, a proposal launched by Charles Michel for the first time in Paris, at the Peace Forum, in November 2020. In fact, the President of the European Council - Charles Michel, stated that "this pandemic is global. We won't be safe until everyone is safe. Thus we have reaffirmed our solidarity with third countries — through COVAX and the sharing of vaccines with our neighbourhood, and beyond"<sup>1</sup>.

In this regard, the Europe Team, "consisting of the European Union, its Member States and their diplomatic networks, as well as financial institutions such as the National Development Banks, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development"<sup>2</sup> contributed 2.47 billion EUR to the COVAX initiative<sup>3</sup>, Through it, more than 40.5 million doses of vaccine have been delivered to date in more than 100 countries around the world. The objective of Team Europe "is to support partner countries in emergency humanitarian need linked to the pandemic. Strengthening the preparedness and response capacities of countries with fragile healthcare systems and providing critical medical supplies and equipment has been shown to be a successful approach in recent outbreaks of Ebola and Zika. Specifically, Team Europe support during the COVID-19 pandemic is focused on the emergency response to humanitarian needs, strengthening health, water and sanitation systems and mitigating the social and economic consequences of the pandemic"<sup>4</sup>.

In the concrete application of the provisions of art. 168 of TFUE, which emphasizes that the Union encourages the investigation of causes, transmission and

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<sup>1</sup> *EU's international solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic* available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/coronavirus/global-solidarity/>, accessed on 23.04.2021.

<sup>2</sup> For more information see *Council reaffirms Team Europe's commitment to the global fight against the pandemic* available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/press/press-releases/2021/04/23/council-reaffirms-team-europe-s-commitment-to-the-global-fight-against-the-pandemic/>, accessed on 23.04.2021.

<sup>3</sup> Strongly supported by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank to ensure equitable and universal access to vaccines against COVID-19.

<sup>4</sup> *EU's international solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic* available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/coronavirus/global-solidarity/>, accessed on 23.04.2021.

prevention of virus-related diseases through the European Commission, mobilized the Horizon 2020 program worth over EUR 660 million for developing vaccines, new treatments, diagnosis and medical systems to stop the spread of Corona virus and save lives, wanting to ensure access for all to vaccines against COVID-19, including citizens in low- and middle-income countries.

In fact, at the end of last year, the foundations were laid for a European Health Union, which provides a stronger framework for health security (including an EU emergency system), but also a greater role for EU agencies acting in the field of health. Among the EU's recommendations to limit the spread of the virus and coordinated action is the proposal to set up green electronic certificates to facilitate free movement within the EU safely during the pandemic, a system that could take effect by the summer of 2021.

The European Union and the United Nations are focusing on supporting the future of Syria and the region<sup>1</sup> and "mobilise the international community in support of a comprehensive and credible political solution to the Syria conflict, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254"<sup>2</sup>, taking into consideration "the most critical humanitarian and resilience issues affecting Syrians and communities hosting refugees from Syria, both inside the country and in the region and will renew the international community's political and financial support for Syria's neighbours, particularly Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as Egypt and Iraq"<sup>3</sup>. In this situation, we cannot help but wonder whether these measures and actions of the European Union could not be considered a new Marshall Plan.

### Conclusions

Solidarity, in the multitude of interpretations that can be attributed to it, represents in turn a concept, principle and value, shared by all actors involved on the international stage, thus bringing its contribution essentially to world peace and security; considering the above, it can be seen that solidarity implies rights and obligations for both the European Union and the Member States have to respect them.

We believe that determination and perseverance are needed to make "the EU with 27 Member States a success, based on this common history. The EU is not perfect, but it is the best tool we have to address the new challenges we face. We need the EU to guarantee not only peace and democracy, but also the security of our citizens. We need the EU to better serve their needs and desires to live, study, work, move and prosper freely across our continent and to benefit from Europe's rich cultural heritage"<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Conference "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" on 29 and 30 March 2021 available at [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/93313/node/93313\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/93313/node/93313_en)., accessed on 14.04.2021.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Bratislava Declaration, September, 16, 2016.

The theoretical and practical aspects presented during this research demonstrate the fundamental values, principles and legislative regulations of the European Union, along with those of other international organizations, giving them the role of acting for international cooperation and solidarity, based on the basic principles of international law. We agree with the opinion that European solidarity is neither innate nor automatic but "is the product of a political construction, sometimes shaped by long diplomatic negotiations, but also improvised in successive crises. A good understanding of its origins and modalities is all the more welcome if we want to shape it differently in the short and medium term".<sup>1</sup> We appreciate that in order to get out of the crisis triggered by this pandemic, international cooperation is required to efficiently manage all situations, but the design and implementation of interconnected public policies at international level are also necessary to support all states to manage a sustainable and inclusive recovery in terms of solidarity and the protection of human rights.

Following this brief legal approach and considering that "the future of the U.E. depends more than ever on the support of citizens "to achieve" a more united Union in diversity, permanently surrounded by the spirit of solidarity (humanized, objective and integrated into society) ", we believe that this will be possible only if European civil society and Member States, regardless of the level of governance, will be involved in the European project" (Marinică, C.E., 2019).

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