sciendo DOI: 10.2478/eustu-2022-0045

A Tale of Two Recipes: Well-being Policy Comes to the Western Capitalism Rescue in the (Post-) Trump and (Post-) COVID-19 Era

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Summary: The neo-authoritarian "Trump Era"-induced political problems have been aggravated further by the coronavirus that triggered an economic slowdown. The new landscape put Western capitalism, international co-operation, and European integration at risk. This contribution shows similarities and differences in policies dealt with the recessions of 2008 and 2020 on both sides of the Atlantic, with a focus on the EU and Canada. It examines the rising popularity of the welfare state concept applied both to individuals and industries particularly in the EU, for which the protection of citizens' well-being and solidarity values are at the bloc integration's core. Ideologically opposing solutions for those crises reflect a fundamental shift in policymaking, reinforcing state interventions policies vs neoliberal approach to the extent of intensified discussions of a universal basic income notion as a response to the inequalities. The article highlights the need for multi – and cross-disciplinary approaches, benefiting policymaking.

Keywords: Covid-19; state intervention; neoliberalism; welfare; integration; media.

JEL Classification: O19, M38.

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1. Introduction

The "Trump Era," i.e. the tectonic shifts in the well-established liberal global economic order by the end of the 45th U.S. presidency, has suddenly been overlapped with a new era of the Covid-19.

That posed even, arguably, more daunting challenges for the world economy while worsening the problems created by nationalist economic policies pursued by China, India, and the United States under the presidency of Donald Trump. In the last decade, there has furthermore been a major eastward shift in the global economic power of an unprecedented nature. The exact composition of the newly emerging global economic powers (including China, Russia, India and Brazil) is not yet clear, but it is now fully acknowledged that the political and economic relevance of the West is being re-scaled. Moreover, global fragmentation and radical "deglobalisation" is a common consideration in international politics.

However, the ongoing crisis has provided an opportunity to assess the resilience of public policies in the European Union and its like-minded partners such as Canada. With doors and gates having slammed shut across the continent as the governments attempted to stop spreading the virus, the idea of borderless Europe is being questioned by critics, considering the pandemic as a serious blow to EU integration. The epidemic of biblical proportions has caught humanity by surprise. As governments and multilateral institutions around the world have not scanted on monetary incentives to support the economy and on urgent monetary policy and regulatory measures, the situation suggested an odd reminiscence of Eurosclerosis – a period in European integration history when protectionism tendencies dominated amidst high unemployment, over-regulation and generous spending on welfare policies resulted, particularly, in a slower pace of European integration. The present crisis has revealed that decades later the same measures supported the European integration: while acting with a great degree of autonomy to put extraordinary measures in place, the European Union (EU) Member States' governments, in actuality, have chosen almost identical policy options that constituted a leap forward on the way of European integration. What's more, a similar course of action has been adopted by Western nations across the Atlantic and elsewhere, thereby contesting the longevity of the idea of economic nationalism and isolationism having boosted populists across Western democracies in the Trump era.

This paper examines the policy responses, produced by governments to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus. That, in turn, has highlighted some fundamental problems while lending itself well to experimenting with workable solutions, cushioning the devastating impact on the global economy.

A few of the most notable and multifaceted policy developments deserve consideration as being directly influenced by the pandemic and embodying the essentials of the Western approach to tackling the overwhelming global challenge. The health crisis and the unprecedented economic collapse in the West, compared with the anti-pandemic responses in the East, have cast doubt on the ability of the neoliberal, austerity-driven political actors to perform the most basic functions of governance: to protect lives and secure livelihoods. The article is aimed to discuss Western democracies and in particular the EU, the Baltic States and Canada in a new environment, which faces multifaceted challenges of a unique global mixed and multidimensional crisis, some of which are putting the achievements of European integration and EU-Canada transatlantic partnership at risk. It is being said repeatedly: the COVID-19 pandemic is going to have major, long-term consequences.

This crisis is very different from previous economic downturns being multidimensional due to a combination of crises in health systems and, consequently, in the economic systems. Nations are dealing with simultaneous crises. The 2008–2013 recession and recovery recipes were based on neoliberal fundamentals, comprising a globalized market-based system, loosening regulatory controls, weakening social safety nets, reducing taxes. However, at times of crises, the neoliberal ideology, advocated by the Washington consensus institutions, supported the implementation of austerity measures (control of budget deficits and public spending) to overcome debt and fiscal problems, followed by neoliberal orthodoxy – market-oriented reform policies, lowering trade barriers and reducing state influence in the economy.

Indeed, Western policy responses, particularly those offered by the EU and Canada (circa 2008-2013) were guided by goals to stabilise, stimulate and recover the financial systems by promoting maximum employment and improving economic conditions.

Similarly, during the Covid-19 crisis, policymakers, backed by international institutions, have responded in delivering cash transfers to households and businesses as significant social protection measures. While many standard economic statistics have yet to catch up with the reality Western countries are experiencing, it is increasingly clear that the effects on Europe's socio-economic conditions as well as in North America are severe. However, this downturn could be to some extent contingent to policy actions taken at all levels of government in many countries to mitigate the socio-economic shock on households and businesses and to support recovery as the worst of the public health crisis is behind.

These measures of the previous 2008 crisis are not entirely useful and appreciated in 2020 due to different conditions that provoked by the Covid-19 crisis.

A move away from the neoliberal policies and neoliberal approach is unlikely to be the only methodology for overcoming this crisis. The actions taken by governments since the very beginning show that some lessons have been learned from the previous crisis and its management. As a result, an austerity policy is not applied to the public sector and is unlikely foreseen in one – or two years; the public sector and institutions consider themselves as the guarantors of their citizens' safety and security. Such a trend was bold at the first stage of the crisis, characterised by lockdown policies.[1]

The novel coronavirus has caused unprecedented government interventions in many countries in the world, including EU Member States (MS). The challenges are similar to a large extent in every MS as they all have to mobilise resources to provide post-disaster health and financial services to communities, businesses and individuals. Strategies developed for preventing, managing and mitigating the stress and anxiety for Europeans, even with some uncertainty, can lead to socio-economic recovery.

At the European level, the foundations of European integration are being questioned. The Single Market was built on the free movement of labour, capital and services, Competition Law, State aid and the Stability and Growth Pact. These pillars have been shaken by the pandemic and will certainly be at the centre of future debates.[2]

The question is whether the EU's essential values will push forward other policies as a result of the crisis? The authors believe that European fundamentals have a strong influence on the political responses not only by the EU institutions but also motivate governments to further harmonize rules and policies to overcome the crisis and its consequences for the sake of benefits, provided by the economic integration.

To maintain Europe's current living standards in a more restrictive global environment, reliance on each other and applying measures preventing barriers caused by the Covid-19, to sustain the welfare benefits of the Single Market, will be crucial. EU integration needs rethinking as it is now in a quandary between the national policies of the MS determined by the global pandemic, effectiveness of their health systems and an urgent need for cooperation by the member states to avoid European divisions and prevent economies and people from the severe economic downturn.

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[1] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. COVID-19 and fiscal relations across levels of government. OECD. Published 2020. http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-and-fiscal-relations-across-levels-of-government-ab438b9f/

[2] ZULEEG, F. *The Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the EU: From the Frying Pan into the Fire.* European Policy Centre; 2020. https://wms.flexious.be/editor/plugins/imagemanager/content/2140/PDF/2020/Economic_impact_of_COVID19_on_EU.pdf

This contribution will pay attention to the process of the EU "Marshall Plan's" implementation considering new economic, social and political realities, including the competences of the European Commission (EC) in such policies as social, public health and health care.[3]

2. Socially Responsible Market Economies

Socially responsible welfare states so far are the model that not only impacts directly on citizens' wellbeing through the provision of personal services and family benefits but also more indirectly through improving the health, wealth and social wellbeing of a whole nation.

The social implications of the pandemic emerged rapidly, the coronavirus affected people indiscriminately across countries and interim quarantine measures have affected horizontally all workers, widening the social gap based on self-surveillance and surveillance of masses by governments' authorities. Covid-19 is not a crisis of neoliberalism or capitalism, according to some scholars.[4]

The uniqueness of the current crisis is that it highlights the contradictions that capitalism creates, which have not been solved by the Western welfare models and their social policies.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), "the world of work is being profoundly affected by the global virus pandemic. In addition to the threat to public health, the economic and social disruption threatens the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions."

Most countries in the Western world have spent resources on an unprecedented scale to boost the economy and employment through fiscal, monetary, social protection and other policies. An important reference for tackling these challenges is provided in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, which sets out a human-centred approach for increasing investment in people's capabilities, the institutions of work, and in the creation of decent and sustainable jobs for the future.[5]

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[3] LEYEN, U., von der. (2020). *Coronavirus: President von der Leyen outlines EU budget as Marshall Plan for Europe's recovery.* webgate.ec.europa.eu. https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/ecfin/item-detail.cfm

[4] BONFERT, B. *Political Economy and Politics: – Covid-19, Critical Political Economy, and the End of Neoliberalism?* European Sociologist. 2020;1(45). https://www.europeansociologist.org/issue-45-pandemic-impossibilities-vol-1/political-economy-and-politics-–-covid-19-critical-political

SAAD-FILHO, A. *From COVID-19 to the End of Neoliberalism.* Critical Sociology. Published online May 29, 2020:089692052092996. doi:10.1177/0896920520929966

[5] International Labour Organization. COVID-19 and the world of work (COVID-19 and the world of work). www.ilo.org. Published 2020. https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/lang--en/index.htm

During the first wave of Covid-19, virtually all EU countries have been in lockdown, to 'flatten the curve' of new infections. That has enormous implications for society at large – for example, through the differential ability of a different social group to protect themselves; the existing social gap before the pandemic was increased.

Governments have intervened to subsidise depressed industries by subsidies to business (flat-rate loans, special reimbursements, tax reliefs) to compensate for forced interruptions. In addition, to sustain aggregate demand, the following measures to keep employment have been introduced in many EU countries: a) compensatory measures for workers whose activities have been suspended, aimed at reducing (even to zero) working hours by public support modelled on the German short-time scheme aimed at saving jobs (Kurzarbeit). As pointed out by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), interest in this model was grown in the pandemic, as Germany's short-time work programme is widely considered the gold standard of such programmes and b) cash compensation for the self-employed.[6]

Trade unions organisations in several OECD countries responded swiftly to the challenges raised by COVID-19.[7] According to the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), short-time work schemes with both employers and governments have been negotiated, so that workers continue to receive their wages or a percentage of their wages. Trade unions have concluded a number of agreements that achieve the triple objective of protecting business, maintaining employment and ensuring that when the EU economies come out of lockdown, they are in the best position to restart their activities. Constructive social dialogue (SD) and decisive response from all social partners are required to provide synergies between social and economic development, effective employment policy and a safety net for the future.[8]

Such initiatives illustrate that SD and collective bargaining can be mobilised to complement public action, identify flexible and balanced solutions for both

[6] International Monetary Fund. Kurzarbeit: Germany's Short-Time Work Benefit. IMF. Published 2020. https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/06/11/na061120-kurzarbeit-germanys-short-time-work-benefit; SCHNETZER, M., TAMESBERGER, D., THEURL, S. *Austrian short-time work model: a labour-market policy for the many, not the few*. Social Europe. Published 2020. https://www.socialeurope.eu/austrian-short-time-work-model-a-labour-market-policy-for-the-many-not-the-few

[7] The Trade Union Advisory Committee. TUAC Assessment of the OECD Employment Outlook 2020. TUAC. Published 2020. https://tuac.org/news/tuac-assessment-of-the-oecd-employment-outlook-2020/

[8] European Trade Union Confederation. Covid-19 Watch: Short Time Work Measures Across Europe. 2020. https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/press-release/file/2020-03/Covid_19%20-%20Briefing%20Short%20Time%20Work%20Measures%20.pdf

companies and workers and strengthen labour market resilience.[9] Furthermore, many OECD countries extensively promoted teleworking or working from home. During the COVID-19 crisis, it was suddenly in both employers' and employees' direct interest to reduce the exposure to the virus and maintain operations. To promote a rapid move to telework for all operations that allow it, countries took a series of measures to simplify its use, including through financial and non-financial support to companies.[10]

The crisis demonstrates the urgency of a coherent, pan-European response to critical aspects of labour regulation and in-work poverty. Existing social safety nets cannot be relied upon to provide adequate protection.[11]

Whatever measures the EU and its MS implement, it is crucial to keep as many in employment as possible.[12] Employment and unemployment subsidies and the postponement of taxes are important steps that have already been introduced by many governments. But protecting employment and productive capacity at a time of dramatic income loss requires immediate liquidity support. This is essential for all businesses to cover their operating expenses during the crisis, be they large corporations or even more so small and medium-sized enterprises and self-employed entrepreneurs. According to the European Central Bank (ECB) "National governments have provided unheard-of fiscal support to firms that retain jobs, helping make the surge in bank loans and corporate debt serviceable ex-post. More than 25 million workers in the euro area – 15% of employment – have been enrolled in short-time work schemes during the second quarter. As a result, jobs and incomes have been protected and the connections between employers and employees have been preserved."[13] Some analysts and politicians depict the role of the state in social protection as a short-term and unsustainable or even counterproductive in the new global scenario. However, the risk of social exclusion and in-work poverty (IWP), which represents a substantial group among workers and their number

[9] OECD. OECD Employment Outlook 2019: The Future of Work. Oecd-ilibrary.org. Published 2019. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/oecd-employment-outlook-2019_9ee00155-en

[10] OECD. OECD Economic Outlook No 107 – Double-hit scenario – (Edition 2020/1). www.oecd-ilibrary.org. Published 2020. Accessed October 7, 2020. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/data/oecd-economic-outlook-statistics-and-projections/oecd-economic-outlook-no-107-double-hit-scenario-edition-2020-1_82024563-en

[11] MARCHAL, S., MARX, I. *Europe's social safety nets were not ready for the corona shock.* Europe. Published 2020. https://www.socialeurope.eu/europes-social-safety-nets-were-not-ready-for-the-corona-shock

[12] DRAGHI, M. *We face a war against coronavirus and must mobilise accordingly*. www.ft.com. Published 2020. https://www.ft.com/content/c6d2de3a-6ec5-11ea-89df-41bea055720b

[13] LAGARDE, C. *Europe's response to the crisis*. www.ecb.europa.eu. Published 2020. https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/blog/date/2020/html/ecb.blog200723~c06fafabb6.en.html

continues to grow in many EU countries started already before the current crisis began.[14] The European Pillar of Social Rights states that 'adequate minimum wages shall be ensured.'[15] As a response to the current crisis, the European Union is aimed to introduce a legal instrument on decent minimum wages in consultations with social partners in 2020. A European framework is foreseen to be designed and implemented. This initiative is another example of the interventionist approach in the EU social dimension in time of the crisis, which has, however, long-term ambition for a Social Europe and the EU efforts to reduce rising wage inequalities and in-work poverty and to provide vulnerable workers with a financial buffer in case of hard times; create greater incentives to work, thereby improving productivity, reduce wage inequalities in society, increase domestic demand, and the resilience of the economy, help close the gender pay gap. However, the legal instrument does not envisage harmonization of minimum wage setting systems depending on the minimum wage setting systems and traditions of the MS, in full respect of national competencies and social partners' contractual freedom.[16] (EC, 2020a.) It would be important to apply the issue of the adequate minimum wage as key elements of the European Semester and country-specific recommendations.[17]

Moreover, a new European Citizens Initiative (ECI) "Start Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU" (ECI 2020) registered at the beginning of the crisis on the 15 May 2020 with the collection dates from 25 September 2020 to 25 September 2021.[18] The aim is to establish the introduction of unconditional basic incomes throughout the EU, which ensures every person's material existence and opportunity to participate in society as part of its economic policy. This shall be reached while remaining within the competences conferred to the EU by the Treaties. The prime objective is to reduce regional disparities to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU and to the joint statement by the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, stated in 2017, in its response to the 2030 Agenda for

[14] PEÑA-CASAS, R., GHAILANI, D., SPASOVA, S., VANHERCKE, B. *Work Poverty in Europe.* A Study of National Policies. 2019, 78–86.

[15] European Council, European Parliament, European Commission. Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future.; 2017. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42017Y0630(01)&from=EN.

[16] European Council. Special meeting of the European Council (17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 July). www.consilium.europa.eu. Published 2020. https://www.consilium.europa.eu

[17] DHÉRET, C., PALIMARICIUC, M. *Minimum wage and the EU: Happily ever after*? The European Policy Centre. Published 2020. https://www.epc.eu/en/publications/Minimum-wage-and-the-EU-Happily-ever-after~33d394

[18] European Citizen Initiative. Start Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU. europa.eu. Published 2020. https://europa.eu/citizens-initiative/initiatives/details/2020/000003_en

Sustainable Development that "the EU and its MS will also support efficient, sustainable and equitable social protection systems to guarantee basic income" to combat inequality. The ECI is another tool that European citizens have to express their "demands" for an increased strengthening of the EU – the need to collect signatures in the majority of the EU MS for this initiative to be valid creates also the necessity for citizens to work across borders for the common goal which could be that of the EU where the voice of the people is heard and counts. The Article 11 (4) of the Lisbon Treaty states that "at least one million citizens of the nationality of EU MS may, on their initiative, invite the European Commission, in the exercise of its EU powers, to submit and make proposals for matters arising from the Treaty to citizens."[19] The ECI is seen as a new opportunity for citizens to participate directly in shaping the future of the EU. The issue has come to the fore under the influence of the free market and free movement of labour.

3. Borrowing from Socialists: Pandemic-Induced Welfare Policies

Indeed, the European Citizen Initiative reflects a revival of interest in the Universal Basic Income (UBI.) For the latter, the mass unemployment caused by the pandemic and consequent recession became an important test marking an abrupt transition from pilot experiments with the concept, long deemed to be a socialist idea challenging capitalism, now putting into practice by liberal democracies in Europe and North America, thereby representing a political consensus.[20] Spain, Italy and Portugal have urged to introduce a pan-EU minimum income system to protect the livelihood of citizenry affected by the pandemic recession, give people a sense of security, reduce social inequalities and regional disparities for the sake of strengthening of the economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European bloc. The idea of the UBI is back into the welfare debate, with a notion of a living wage or unconditional living allowance being discussed in France, Germany and elsewhere. Those advocating the adding of the UBI as an essential element of the policy packages argue that otherwise, the world will have to

[19] Official Journal of the European Union. EUR-Lex – C2012/326/01 – EN – EUR-Lex. eur-lex.europa.eu. Published 2012. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:C2012/326/01

[20] WRIGHT, E. O. (2006). *Basic Income as a Socialist Project. Basic Income Studies*. 1(1); YLIKÄNNÖ, M. *Could the COVID-19 crisis revive the idea of a Universal Basic Income?* Friends of Europe. Published 2020. Accessed October 7, 2020. https://www.friendsofeurope.org/insights/could-the-covid-19-crisis-revive-the-idea-of-a-universal-basic-income

deal with the widespread social discontent and violence, coupled with chaotic flows of migration fertilizing the soil for extremism and ultimately would cost governments even more.[21]

The same enthusiasm was abundantly evident in Canada, where the liberal government of Justin Trudeau has introduced The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) giving financial support to employed and self-employed Canadians who were directly affected by COVID-19. Those eligible receive C$2,000 (US$1,495) a month as a taxable benefit. The benefits program with a total estimated cost of $71.3 billion was repeatedly extended. Subsequently, the Senate national finance committee has urged the federal government and the provinces consider a UBI as a longer-term option.[22]

Another essential point is that the pandemic has revealed a need for a sort of UBI not only for individuals but also for the whole industries whose services proved to be essential in addressing the crisis and its adverse and wide-ranging implications. Particularly, the public interest journalism, suffering from the gradual collapse of its business model, turned to be a frontline defence against spreading the disinformation about coronavirus, known since then as "infodemic." The pandemic has seen an outburst of conspiracy theories, both well-known and novel ones. The outbreak of disinformation has revived severe political and social hostilities on a global scale, with Asians finding themselves the target of racists attacks. As demonstrated in the special report of European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force, falsehoods and myths about the pandemic, in some cases conducted by state or state-sponsored actors, are fraught with "harmful consequences for public security, health and effective crisis communications." Equally important, misinformation and speculations about symptoms, unproven drugs and dubious therapy methods put lives at risk, therefore the World Health Organization (WHO) that had been authorized by the United Nations (UN) to coordinate emergency response to the novel coronavirus crisis, has designated a special section on its webpage to debunk myths about the pandemic. Nonetheless, reputable health practitioners emphasize the incontestably

[21] KASSAM, A. *Spain rekindles a radical idea: a Europe-wide minimum income.* The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/03/spain-rekindles-a-radical-idea-a-europe-wide-minimum-income. Published June 3, 2020; HORVATH, B., WIGNARAJA, K. *Universal basic income is the answer to the inequalities exposed by COVID-19.* World Economic Forum. Published 2020. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/covid-19-universal-basic-income-social-inequality

[22] Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Canada. Legislative Costing Note; 2020. https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/LEG/LEG-2021-032-S/LEG-2021-032-S_en.pdf; CURRY, B. *Senators urge Ottawa to target income-support programs on economic recovery*. The Globe and Mail. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-senators-urge-ottawa-to-target-income-support-programs-on-economic/. Published 2020.

key role of the traditional media in providing evidence-based information to the general public.[23]

Meanwhile, trusted news providers are struggling because of a steady decline in media revenues due to the dysfunction of its business models in the era of digital platforms and are less and less capable to perform their social functions effectively. The pandemic has fostered the environment conducive to the translation of the feasible policy options into concrete political steps, regulation and law-making, with Western governments all over the world responding to the demand for providing a lifeline to the quality press.

In multiple liberal countries, the industry lobbies have introduced proposals to keep the press afloat. In the UK, The National Union of Journalists has introduced a plan of action to save the industry, "essential" in keeping the governments in check.[24] The Magazine Publishers Association of New Zealand has petitioned the government for the national media industry being classified as an "essential service."[25]

The pandemic has moved governments in the West to act. The concept of journalism as part of critical infrastructure is gaining acceptance on the administrative level, with governments of Ireland and the Canadian province of Quebec including news organizations in their lists of the entities providing an "essential service."[26] Australia and New Zealand allocated tens of millions of dollars for the ailing media industry relief, stressing the essential role of news service.[27] (Meade, 2020, Faafoi, 2020.) In doing so, the politicians accommodate the popular demand coming from an overwhelming part of their constituencies. In Canada,

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[23] ZAROCOSTAS, J. *How to fight an infodemic*. The Lancet. 2020. 395(10225):676. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30461-X

[24] National Union of Journalists. NUJ launches News Recovery Plan. Published 2020. https://www.nuj.org.uk/news/nuj-launches-news-recovery-plan/

[25] EDMUNDS, S., COOKE, H. *Prime Minister "gutted" Bauer closing its doors, but says company refused wage subsidy.* Stuff, Published 2020. https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/120754944/publisher-of-metro-womans-day-closes-in-nz-amid-coronavirus-woes?rm=m

[26] Government of Ireland. COVID-19 (Coronavirus). www.gov.ie. Published 2020. Accessed October 7, 2020. https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dfeb8f-list-of-essential-service-providers-under-new-public-health-guidelin; Gouvernement du Québec. List of essential services and commercial activities COVID-19. www.quebec.ca. Published 2020. https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/essential-services-commercial-activities-covid19/#c48457

[27] MEADE, A. *Dozens of Australian newspapers stop printing as coronavirus crisis hits advertising*. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2020/apr/14/dozens-of-australian-newspapers-stop-printing-as-coronavirus-crisis-hits-advertising. Published April 14, 2020; FAAFOI, K. (2020). *Media support package delivers industry request for assistance.* [online] The Beehive. Available at: https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/media-support-package-delivers-industry-request-assistance.

most citizens support state funding to prevent failing news providers from closing down; nearly three-quarters of Canadians say social media platforms are less accurate than traditional media, according to the recent poll conducted by Nanos pollster for Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, a non-governmental organization, operating in the field of journalism (Nanos Research, 2020.) In Europe, members of the European Parliament have urged to rescue the media as a "pillar of democracy" and a deterrent to the fake news and the "infodemic."[28]

The current mixed crisis is a challenge not only for Europe's economic performance but as well for its values – social cohesion and solidarity. However, many governments will be tempted to focus on jobs and growth solely. That challenge is to be understood in a double sense, as a threat to and as an opportunity for social cohesion. In some countries, the crisis will generate an impetus towards a more sustainable and socially oriented society.

4. Recovery Instruments, Integration and Cooperation

4.1. Battle for the EU Single Market principles and recovery plan

The size and persistence of the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis are unknowable. The OECD indicated that global economic activity will fall by 6% in 2020 and OECD unemployment climbed to 9.2% from 5.4% in 2019. This is a scenario without a second wave. In the case of the second wave with renewed lockdowns, then the OECD estimated a drop of 7.6%, before climbing back to 2.8% in 2021.[29]

The European economy entered a sudden recession in the first half of this year with the deepest output contraction since World War II. To counter the spread of COVID-19, major containment measures were introduced around the world, voluntarily shutting down large parts of the economy. A string of indicators suggests that the euro area economy has operated at between 25% to 30% below its capacity during the period of the strictest confinement. Overall, the euro area economy is forecast to contract by about 8 ¾ % in 2020 before recovering at an

[28] A group of MEPs and media policy experts, LECLERCQ, C. *Health, trust and journalism: a Coronavirus Plan for the Media.* www.euractiv.com. Published 2020. https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/opinion/health-trust-and-journalism-a-coronavirus-plan-for-the-media

[29] OECD (2020), OECD Economic Outlook, No. 107 (Edition 2020/1), OECD Economic Outlook: Statistics and Projection (Database), https://oecd.github.io/EO-Outlook_chart_2/

annual growth rate of 6% next year.[30] Pandemic time has turned to unprecedented government interventions across the EU avoiding the Single Market principles and freedoms. The current Covid-19 crisis has changed the conditions under which the common market operates. To adjust to the global structural economic changes and fluctuations requires creating a substantive common microeconomic and sectoral policy framework to continue the four freedoms that are beyond state intervention.

The White Paper on levelling the playing field as regards foreign subsidies by the EC recognises that State aids can distort the Single Market. "In the current context of the COVID-19 crisis, EU MS grant significant amounts of State aid to support individual undertakings and the EU economy as a whole. It is a situation in which State aid is an indispensable means at the disposal of public authorities to stabilise the economy and accelerate research in the coronavirus. The current situation illustrates the importance of preserving the level playing field within the internal market, even in exceptional economic circumstances."[31]

The response to COVID-19 – related economic challenges is changing the philosophy and economic behaviour as well as economic structures. In certain sectors, including health, the demands for reshoring production within the EU are becoming hard to resist. At the global level, the 'my country first' narrative is quite strong, the need to increase strategic autonomy of countries and ensure the security of supply, the desire to rescue companies that would be competitive in the post-COVID-19 as well as to save as many jobs as possible.[32]

However, as Covid-19 transmission rates have declined in European countries by June – July 2020, restrictions have been eased and economies opened up. In this situation, policymakers tried to balance continued suppression of the virus with a progressive restarting of economic activities, including cross-border flows such as tourism. In summer 2020 recovery plans are starting to be implemented at local, regional, national and European levels. The economic impact of the pandemic, and the capacity for recovery, vary greatly across sectors and regions, depending on national ability to control the spread of the virus, the duration and stringency of lockdown measures, regional economic structures and the scope to support economic activity and resilience. The massive economic, financial and social impact of the Covid-19 crisis presents a huge policy challenge at all levels

[30] European Commission. Press corner. European Commission – European Commission. Published May 6, 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_799

[31] EUR Lex. EUR-Lex – 52020DC0253 – EN – EUR-Lex. eur-lex.europa.eu. Published June 17, 2020. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2020:253:FIN

[32] ZULEEG, F. *He Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the EU: From the Frying Pan into the Fire*. European Policy Centre; 2020. https://wms.flexious.be/editor/plugins/imagemanager/content/2140/PDF/2020/Economic_impact_of_COVID19_on_EU.pdf

of government. As the European Commission noted, "the impact and recovery potential also depend on each country's demographic or economic structure, with for instance those with a high number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) hit harder. This has a considerable knock-on impact on the Single Market and widens divergences and disparities between the MS. This is reflected in the fact that the recession will be close to 10% for some countries, compared to an average of between 6-7.5% elsewhere."[33] EU MS agreed in April 2020 on a 'road-map' for a recovery to relaunch the EU economy. The European Commission has now put forward proposals to implement the roadmap, including territorially focused interventions to support economic, social and territorial cohesion. Next Generation EU (NGEU) is a new recovery instrument of €750 billion which will boost the EU budget with new financing raised on the financial markets for 2021–2024. Besides this instrument, the Recovery Plan for Europe comprises a revised proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021–27 and further resources committed outside the EU budget.

The NGEU is based on three pillars: 1. Supporting the MS to recover, 2. Kick-starting the economy and helping private investment and 3. Learning lessons from the crisis. According to the A18 in Conclusions of the Special meeting of the European Council (17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 July 2020,) "the MS shall prepare national recovery and resilience plans setting out the reform and investment agenda of the MS concerned for the years 2021-23. The plans will be reviewed and adapted as necessary in 2022 to take account of the final allocation of funds for 2023.[34] The abovementioned measures will lead to an advanced approach to the functioning of the Single Market and its instruments.

4.2. Baltic States as Strong Supporters of the Integration

Covid-19 is a major challenge for the Baltic small and open economies. In the 2008 crisis, Baltic States had very large imbalances such as unsustainable current account deficit, high inflation and pro-cyclical fiscal policy, credit and real estate bubble, booming private debt and overvalued real estate. The recovery took the Baltic States long years. The recent strong growth years with good fundamentals, such as fiscal discipline and surpluses in current accounts have all facilitated strong labour markets. Membership in the Eurozone guaranteed

[33] EUR Lex. EUR Lex – 52020DC0456 – EN – EUR-Lex. eur-lex.europa.eu. Published May 27, 2020. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2020:456:FIN

[34] European Council. European Council conclusions, 17–21 July 2020. www.consilium.europa.eu. Published July 21, 2020. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/07/21/european-council-conclusions-17-21-july-2020/

that the Baltic States are much better prepared to fight the current crisis; therefore, the long-term impact should be less pronounced. In general, the severity of the crisis in certain economic sectors could be relatively similar across EU countries. However, the tourism sector in the Baltics is not large and relatively less sophisticated manufacturing base with large food, wood and metal product sectors could also be more resilient to a downturn in demand despite more than 60% of the manufacturing is export-orientated depending on the demand in the EU, which required close ties with the rest of the bloc.[35] The spread of the virus at the beginning of the pandemic was less effective in the Baltic States than one expects; the lockdown measures have been much less severe than in other parts of Europe. The advantage of the Baltics in less densely populated territories, with a quick response to crises due to their size, as well as being relatively well digitalised, especially Estonia. However, European superpowers still are in a better position than the Baltics in larger healthcare spending, wider existing safety net, as well as more impressive additional fiscal stimulus. The governments in the Baltics are acting, providing support to both businesses and households without significant delays, however, the power of governments is limited compared with more wealthy partners in the EU. Overall, the recovery plans adopted at the EU level could help the Baltic States to recover with less socio-economic consequences relying on economic integration, cohesion and solidarity values. The crisis will ultimately change the way of doing business and working conditions and is likely to speed up the digitisation process of the European economies and shortening and simplifying the supply chains, bringing them closer to the customer. The transition to digitalisation is accelerated. Given the developed infrastructure, the Baltic States could be in a good position in the digitalisation process.

4.3. A territorial dimension of the Covid-19

According to the OECD study on the territorial impact of Covid-19, the socio-economic asymmetry of the pandemic consequences across Europe, countries and regions is largely shaped by the diversity of regional socio-economic characteristics. The regional and local impact of the COVID-19 crisis is highly heterogeneous, with a strong territorial dimension and significant implications for crisis management and policy responses (OECD 2020d.) The regional

[35] Ministry of Economics of Latvia. Government approves establishment of alternative investment fund to support enterprises affected by Covid-19 – Ministry of Economics. www.em.gov.lv. 2020. https://www.em.gov.lv/en/news/28479-government-approves-establishment-of-alternative-investment-fund-to-support-enterprises-affected-by-covid-19

differences appeared to be significant particularly in between more-developed and less-developed regions.

Many Southern regions in the EU are regarded as being the worst affected. The key differences among MS and EU institutions are on the scale and mechanism of the European Recovery Package, its size, importance of grants, loans and guarantees, the methods for allocating funding etc. resulted in the debate that clearly shows different national positions mostly between southern EU countries (Italy and Spain) and the smaller net payer countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden) / The Eastern European MS, as well as Cyprus and Malta, would prefer a package predominantly or wholly made of grants. Most countries, including Bulgaria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Romania and Slovenia, are in favour of the EC proposal of a mix of loans and grants. Furthermore, there is no clear consensus on links of the Recovery and Resilience fund (RRF) with the European Semester and concern about the absorption capacity for REACT-EU – Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and Territories of Europe, which mechanism is based on flexible cohesion policy grants for municipalities, hospitals, companies via MS' managing authorities. No national co-financing is required. Additional issues, prominent in the debate: the relationship between investment and reforms, the role of the EU Competition policy, especially the control of State aid. However, a Franco-German agreement had enabled the approval of the EC plan for recovery, in which the role of Cohesion policy in responding to the sectoral and territorial impact of the pandemic was recognised.[36]

Scholars and experts express their opinion that a successful response to COVID-19, which ignores societal or territorial borders, must build on cooperation. To do so also the analysis of impacts of COVID-19 needs to go beyond national borders and take a European approach. However, one-size-fits-all approaches will not be able to help all regions in their recovery, nor to utilise the diverse potential for recovery in Europe. Sectors that are less affected by COVID-19 policy responses might play a crucial role in the recovery processes.[37] EU leaders have to be fully aware to see the simultaneous challenge of a new global reality and the trends of internal weakening. Consolidation and improved functioning require bold innovation and a complete renovation in key areas of EU integration.

[36] BACHTLER, J., MENDEZ, C., WISHLADE, F. *The Recovery Plan for Europe and Cohesion Policy: An Initial Assessment.* European Regional Policy Research Consortium Paper 20/1. European Policies Research Centre, Glasgow and Delft; 2020.

[37] BÖHME, K., BESANA, F. *Understanding the Territorially Diverse Implications of COVID-19 Policy Responses.* 2020.

4.4. A Complex Concept of "Health for all and in all policies"

Health is "priceless"; achieving and maintaining the best health possible for individuals and the population is both costly and requires a considerable workforce. It is however increasingly recognised that health is a major contributor to the "wealth" of nations. Furthermore, in recent years it has become generally acknowledged that health is a much more complex concept than the absence of disease; health is seen as a strong predictor of economic growth. The concept of Health for All and Health in all Policies (HiaP) emerged in the 1970s-1908s. In 1981, Dr. Haldan Mahler, Director General (1973–1983) of the WHO, defined the basic elements of the concept as follows: "Health For All implies the removal of the obstacles to health – quite as much as it does the lack of doctors, hospital beds, drugs and vaccines."[38]

Health in All Policies (HiAP) was formally legitimated as an EU approach in 2006. It resulted from more long-term efforts to enhance action on considering health and health policy implications of other policies, as well as recognition that European-level policies affect health systems and scope for health-related regulation at the national level. However, the implementation of HiAP has remained a challenge. European-level efforts to use health impact assessment to benefit public health and health systems have not become strengthened by the new procedures. As a result of the Lisbon Treaty, European-level policymaking is expected to become more important in shaping national policies. HiAP has at the European level remained mostly as rhetoric but legitimates health arguments and provides policy space for health articulation within EU policymaking. HiAP is a broader approach than health impact assessment and at the European level requires consideration of mechanisms that recognise the nature of European policymaking.[39]

While the "Health in all policies (HiAP)" concept, by excellence an interdisciplinary approach, and the urgent need for its implementation is now widely recognized, its real implementation at all levels of government is lagging. As a result, the public health area of human endeavour, facing already for several decades, the need for reform.[40]

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[38] MAHLER, M. The Meaning of "Health for All by the Year 2000". *American Journal of Public Health*, 2016;106(1):36-38. doi:10.2105/ajph.2016.106136

[39] KOIVUSALO, M. The state of Health in All policies (HiAP) in the European Union: potential and pitfalls. Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health. 2010;64(6):500-503. doi:10.1136/jech.2009.102020

[40] BERLIN, A., Interdisciplinarity as an Increasingly Implied and Applied Concept, in: Interdisciplinarity in Social Sciences: Does It Provide Answers to Current Challenges in Higher Education and Research? (MURAVSKA,T., OZOLINA, Z., eds.). University of Latvia Press, 2011, p. 136.

The new European Policy for Health – Health 2020, and the European Action Plan for Strengthening Public Health was adopted by the 53 Member States of the Region during the sixty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in September 2012.[41]

The current Covid-19 health crisis not only worsened but also highlighted the EU vulnerability to global challenges and turbulence. There is an imperative need to maintain the long-term goals of health policies and research responding to economic and social challenges. Moreover, the crisis requires to improve the resilience, wellbeing and mental health of the population and mitigate health inequalities during and after pandemics. The globally interconnected nature of health and the cross – and trans-disciplinary nature of health research is implemented within the European Research and Innovation Framework. A facilitated global research collaboration through Horizon Europe could ensure that Global Health innovations and solutions benefit all parts of the world including EU countries.[42]

As the crisis shows, there is growing confidence that reforms of health systems and increase of European Community competence in, for example, tackling cross-border health threats and strengthening health systems and healthcare workforce. Several instruments are suggested by the EC jointly supported by the MS. The most prominent is the investment of €9.4 billion from the EU's next long-term budget in the EU4Health programme, this is 23 times more than health funding for 2014-2020.[43] The programme will be launched in 2021 and will strengthen national systems by funding initiatives such as tailor-made support and advice to countries, training for healthcare professionals for deployment across the EU. Additionally, further investment in health will be provided through other EU programmes including the European regional development and cohesion funds for medical infrastructure, Horizon Europe for health research and innovation, Digital Europe programme, European Social Fund and rescEU – EU emergency response. A special focus in the EU programmes is on vulnerable groups.[44]

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[41] WHO. About Health 2020. Published 2012. Accessed October 7, 2020. https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-policy/health-2020-the-european-policy-for-health-and-well-being/about-health-2020

[42] European Commission. *On Establishing the Specific Programme Implementing Horizon Europe-the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation*; 2018. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-horizon-europe-decision_en.pdf

[43] European Commission (2020*). Opening Remarks by Commissioner Kyriakides at the Press Conference on the EU4Health Programme*. [online] European Commission – European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_20_965

[44] European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations – European Commission. (2020). *EU budget for recovery: €2 billion to reinforce rescEU direct crisis response tools.* [online] Available

Furthermore, to support harmonisation of actions, the EU will create a common reserve of medical equipment, which is the first-ever common European stockpile of emergency medical equipment created under rescEU-EU emergency response to help fill the lack of resources, which the many Member States lacked while struggling in spreading the pandemic in Europe. The EC will finance 90% of the cost of the reservation, assigning the European Emergency response Coordination Centre to manage the distribution of the equipment. According to estimates, the initial EU budget for this reserve is 50 euros million euros.[45]

The efficient and better resilience of the national public health systems will be improved with their further harmonization based on the "one health approach" methodology. Investment in disease prevention programmes is foreseen in all MS. As a result of the joint efforts of the MS, national health systems become more efficient and resilient.

The above initiatives at the EU level could lead to a more harmonized approach to the public health and healthcare policies among MS and the stronger role of the EU and increase its competence in the long-term.

Health, as a human capital ingredient, is especially relevant for sustained economic development and social cohesion. These two political objectives figure now prominently on the EU agenda and play a central role in the European Union's Social and Cohesion policies.

5. The Other Side of the Pond: Deficit Soaring for the Sake of Well-being

Admittedly, the conceptually similar approach has been adopted by Western governments in various geographies and designed to ensure that people have food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. For Canada, the pandemic resulted in the recession in the first quarter of 2020, with national GDP falling unprecedentedly, by 11.6% in April. It had been preceded with, as per C.D. Howe Institute's Business Cycle Council definition, "a pronounced, persistent, and pervasive decline in aggregate economic activity," with GDP and employment as its main metrics.[46]

at: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/news/eu-budget-recovery-2-billion-reinforce-resceu-direct-crisis-response-tools_en.

[45] European Commission (2020a). *COVID-19: Commission creates first ever rescEU stockpile of medical equipment.* [online] European Commission – European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_476

[46] GORDON, J., JOHNSON, K. *Canada GDP likely to rise 3 % in May on gradual reopening.* Reuters. 2020. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-canada-economy-gdp/canada-gdp-likely-to-rise

Thirty percent of the workforce or 5.5 million Canadians either lost their jobs or saw their working hours significantly reduced over March and April, with expected economy contraction by 6.8 percent in 2020, its sharpest drop since the Great Depression, before rebounding by 5.5 percent in 2021, according to the official forecast.[47]

To address the crisis, the government of Canada has taken decisive actions, coming up with a historic plan of emergency support measures, with spending levels not seen since the Second World War. The federal government expected that the deficit to hit C$343 billion (US$257 billion) in 2020 due to pandemic-related support programs. The government rejected the criticism, stressing the primary goal of the anti-crisis expenditures: the protection of the health and economic well-being of the nation, with policymakers' inaction fraught with a risk of loss of millions of jobs while "putting the burden of debt onto families and jeopardizing Canada's resilience."[48] Notably, Canada's economic response plan, representing nearly 14 percent of GDP, included more than $230 billion in measures to protect the health and safety of Canadians and provide direct support to citizens and employers, and up to $85 billion in tax and customs duty payment deferrals to meet liquidity needs of households and entrepreneurs. However, upon recovery from COVID-19, Canada was expected to maintain its low debt advantage among G7 countries. As a result of the government's handling of the pandemic, the popularity of governing parties across Canada skyrocketed, including Trudeau's federal Liberals which enjoyed the boost in support, the biggest for a minority government since the 1950s.[49]

It is apparent that the EU's way of interactions with its member states can be compared with the Canadian model of federal-provincial collaboration, where locally elected governments exercise significant autonomy in policymaking. That was once again illustrated by the counter-crisis measures, with Ottawa taking the lead in distributing federal money while provincial governments followed

-3-in-may-on-gradual-reopening-idUSKBN241217; C.D. Howe Institute's Business Cycle Council. Canada Entered Recession in First Quarter of 2020: C.D. Howe Institute Business Cycle Council. C.D. Howe Institute. Published 2020. https://www.cdhowe.org/council-reports/canada-entered-recession-first-quarter-2020-cd-howe-institute-business-cycle-council

47 Government of Canada. Overview of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. canada.ca. Published July 15, 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/services/publications/economic-fiscal-snapshot/overview-economic-response-plan.html

48 TASKER, J-P. *Ottawa to post $343B deficit as spending hits levels not seen since Second World War.* CBC. Published 2020. https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/bill-morneau-fiscal-update-budget-deficit-1.5641864

49 GRENIER, É. (2020). *Boost in support for Liberals the biggest for a minority government in 60 years*. [online] CBC. Available at: https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/boost-in-support-for-liberals-the-biggest-for-a-minority-government-in-60-years-1.5633289

their own scenarios in tackling the spread of the coronavirus and multi-speed reopening.[50]

The similarity between the approaches to tackling the crisis invites broader comparison, including in the scope and essentiality of multilateral cooperation, both regional and international ones. For relatively small or midsize open economies like Canada's and those if some EU MS, the international cooperation is of vital importance; it will be economically essential to remain open and interlinked with the global economy and cooperate in the framework of partnership agreements with close allies, for instance, the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) The latter has played an important role in paving the way for the post-pandemic economic recovery, notably by keeping essential medical supply chains open and, ultimately, reopening the EU's borders to citizens from 15 non-EU countries, including Canada, but excluding the US.[51]

The depth and nature of the crisis imply that there will be many structural changes, and the world's approach to economic development will be corrected over time to "a new normal". The crisis could generate an impetus towards more sustainable and socially oriented economies. However, many governments will be unable to shape the global environment individually but are reliant on cross-border trade, international trade and investment. Finally, the global nature of the crisis requires international cooperation, which, if maintained, can help in addressing other global crises – like climate change.

6. Conclusions

The spread of the novel coronavirus has underscored some fundamental problems related to state vs market contributing to Trump's protectionist era. A new wave of Marxist-institutionalist inter-disciplinary discussions attempting to explain the potential synergies between the public and the private domains in the functioning of societies is gaining strength as a result of a need for a different

[50] BOUTILIER, A. (2020). *Ottawa sending $19B to provinces for COVID-19 aid*. [online] thestar.com. Available at: https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2020/07/16/ottawa-sending-19b-to-provinces-for-covid-19-aid.html; TETREAULT, M. *COVID-19: Recovery and Re-opening Tracker.* McCarthy Tétrault. Published 2020. https://www.mccarthy.ca/en/insights/articles/covid-19-recovery-and-re-opening-tracker

[51] The Canadian Press (2020). European Union to rally Canada, allies to help WHO after U.S. halts funding. Global News. [online] 25 Apr. Available at: https://globalnews.ca/news/6867771/eu-who-funding-canada/; The Associated Press (2020). Canadians to be allowed into EU countries, but U.S. citizens shut out. [online] CBC. Available at: https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/european-union-travel-list-1.5632422

approach applied in tackling the 2020 crisis. The neoliberal agenda in 2008 has been changed to unprecedented state interventions by Western governments, greatly extending the generosity of the welfare state.

A stable economy is essential for Western countries and is a key part of the EU's role in the changing world. The need to reassess the role of the government and good governance is discussed at all levels. The crisis has highlighted solidarity as one of the fundamentals of the European integration and the opportunity to maintain the function of the Single Market based on four freedoms for economic benefits, cohesion and wellbeing of people. COVID-19 has shown that there can be no health policy and adequate social support to people without solidarity and strong state capacity. As the crisis shows, there is growing confidence that upcoming reforms of health systems and social support to the population could lead to an increase of the European Community competence in related policies. It is assumed that building a sustained economic recovery in the EU will require an unprecedented level of political and cooperation among governments, businesses, and individuals.

The same trend could be observed in the similar political, social, and economic setting across the Atlantic: in Canada at the federal and provincial levels. "Whatever it takes" is the motto to preserve lives and reduce economic declines. A transition to another growth model corresponding to "a new normality" has to be developed and aimed at public services, common goods and solidarity in the heart of the economy and social policies.

The above-indicated aspects are subject to further strong cross-disciplinary research with a comparative approach to outbreak response as well as impacts on social dynamics by different regions and countries in the West, considering societal and cultural structures, health system preparedness and resilience are needed. The results could show to the policymakers which interventions by governments and to what extent have been most successful in controlling the epidemiological dynamics and economic losses.

We conclude that in times of economic hardship it is important that universities, governments and businesses collaborate in research, innovation and development. With no clear end to the current economic situation in Europe, North America, and other parts of the world, there is more need than ever for strategic partnerships and cooperation between all partners.

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