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E SULL'INTEGRAZIONE EUROPEA

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SENT
Thematic Network of European Studies

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IDEAS OF EUROPE
IN NATIONAL POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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FOREWORD

The speed and depth with which the European Communities/European Union has evolved is breathtaking and has radically shaped the life of the continent. Ever since the beginning of this ambitious economic and political project, scholars around the world have tried to explain the underlying logic behind it and the mechanisms of its functioning. Thus, a plethora of studies developed alongside the evolution of the EU.

SENT (*Network of European Studies*) is an innovative and ambitious project which brought together about 100 partners from the EU member states, candidate and associated countries, and other parts of the world. It was a far reaching project aimed to overcome disciplinary and geographical-linguistic boundaries in order to assess the state of EU studies today, as well as the idea of Europe as transmitted by schools, national politicians, the media, etc.

SENT's main goal was to map European studies, in order to get a comprehensive picture of the evolution of European studies over the last decades in different disciplines and countries. This approach permitted to achieve a better understanding of the direction these studies are now taking. Five disciplines were identified where EU studies have particularly evolved: law, politics, economics, history, and social and cultural studies. The mapping of EU studies thus includes a review of the most studied issues in EU studies today, the main academic schools, the most influential journals and books published, but it also shows how local realities and national identities affect the study and teaching of Europe around the world. In addition, an important work was done in mapping and discussing teaching methodologies in relation to European studies with the aim of introducing and diffusing the most up-to-date techniques.

The project was structured in various working groups, corresponding to their respective disciplines. These networks worked closely together to ensure a discussion across geographic boundaries. At the same time, the SENT network brought together scholars around the world in a direct and multidisciplinary dialogue in a General Assembly held in Rome in July 2010 to reflect on the state of the EU disciplines and their future.

We are very proud to present the results of this ambitious project in a series of volumes. The following are being published with Il Mulino:

1. *European Integration Process Between History and New Challenges*, edited by Ariane Landuyt;
2. *Analyzing European Union Politics*, edited by Federiga Bindi and Kjell A. Eliassen;
3. *Integration Through Legal Education. The Role of EU Legal Studies in Shaping the EU*, edited by Valentino Cattelan;
4. *Questioning the European Identity/ies: Deconstructing Old Stereotypes and Envisioning New Models of Representation*, edited by Vita Fortunati and Francesco Cattani;
5. *Ideas of Europe in National Political Discourse*, edited by Cláudia T. Ramos;
6. *Communication, Mediation and Culture in the Making of Europe*, edited by Juliet Lodge and Katharine Sarikakis.

Other two volumes are part of the SENT series and will be published elsewhere: *Mapping European Economic Integration*, edited by Amy Verdun and Alfred Tovias with Palgrave and *Teaching European Studies Curricula and Teaching Methods*, edited by Stefania Baroncelli, Roberto Farneti, Ioan Horga and Sophie Vanhoonacker with Springer.

The extensive work of this project was coordinated by Prof. Federiga Bindi, Director of the Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence of the University of Rome Tor Vergata and her valuable team, and benefited from the generous support of the European Commission.

The scientific organisation was assured by a core

coordinating committee formed by: Federiga Bindi, Ariane Landuyt, Kjell A. Eliassen, Vita Fortunati, Stefania Baroncelli, Ioan Horga, Sophie Vanhoonacker, Cláudia Toriz Ramos, Juliet Lodge, Amy Verdun and Alfred Tovias.

It is fair to say that these volumes show how the EU has uniquely affected not only the daily life on the 'old continent', but also its scholarly work. We hope that this project opens the path for further extended debates about these transformations providing food for thought and research tools for young researchers, practitioners and scholars of European affairs alike.

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