

\*\*\* **ALESSANDRA SILVEIRA, MARIANA CANOTILHO, PEDRO MADEIRA FROUFE** (Editors): *Citizenship and Solidarity in the European Union. From the Charter of Fundamental Rights to the Crisis, the State of the Art. Presses Interuniversitaires Européennes / Peter Lang (1 av. Maurice, B-1050 Brussels. Tel: (41-32) 3761717 - fax: 3761727 - Email: info@peterlang.com - Internet: www.peterlang.com). "Euroclio" series, No. 77. 2013, 489 pp. €62.10. ISBN 978-2-87574-109-7.*

This is an important book because of the questions it tackles and the answers it brings. There is absolutely nothing politically correct about it. It is also very innovative from a number of different perspectives, as well as in the analysis and ideas that shape the 29 contributions contained in this publication. It is a scientifically written book and the result of an international conference organised in May 2012 at the faculty of Law at the University of Minho in Portugal. There is a lot of food for thought in it, as well as a call to arms, rebellion and revolt against the various guises of conformism that currently threaten to lead the European project to a dead end, as well as the European democracies with it.

First of all, let's look at the questions formulated by Mariana Canotilho at the beginning of his introduction to the book. These are uncomfortable questions, heavy with meaning and accusations. He looks at what has happened to the promises to respect the inviolable and inalienable individual rights of freedom, democracy and equality proclaimed in the preamble to the Treaty on European Union, in the context of the deepest economic and social crisis of recent decades. He also looks at the way in which the Union seeks to demonstrate its support for fundamental social rights in these times of ever-increasing precarious labour markets, the grey area that exists between employment and self-employment and the demands for deregulating the labour market. Is this simply the recriminations of a trade unionist? No, these questions are raised by a professor of public Law at the University of Coimbra, who is now a legal adviser to the president of the Portuguese Constitutional Court and who dares to ask another question that could possibly be deemed incongruous and out of place by a good many governments: how will it be possible to obtain a strengthening and convergence of the European economies and promote economic and social progress, whilst what we hear from European political leaders are nothing but proposals for austerity programmes that do not appear to be working?

Asking this kind of question will certainly grate with or fall on the deaf ear of the worker ants in the North, who will interpret it as nothing other than carping. They should, however, be reassured or concerned because this book is not only written by Southern European authors, as we see by some of the other contributors such as, Jonathan Tomkin, Elaine Dewhurst, Katarzyna Gromek Broc, Bruno de Witte, Tamara Hervey and Leonard F. M. Besselin. It is a book that is less interested in the politics of envy and complaining and more interested in outlining the possibilities for putting back the European project on the right tracks before there is any fatal swerving off course. This is indeed a kind of medical diagnosis formulated by the authors of the five different parts of the book. In the first part, the different ills affecting democracy and citizenship in the European Union and its member states are analysed. In the second part, the ills affecting the economic and social health of increasing numbers of European citizens are explored in light of the imperative for greater competitiveness and the subsequent development models that result from this. The contribution that follows looks at the different questions relating to constitutionalism at its different levels and the quest for a European identity. The fourth part focuses on the themes of equality and solidarity, "the promises most often forgotten in the integration process", as

pointed out Mariana Canotilho - whilst the final part of the book looks at questions of culture and diversity, two essential component parts of the European project.

If a diagnosis is proffered, then a prescription is also required. There are many different prescriptions proposed throughout the book right up until the conclusions drawn by Mariana Canotilho and his two collaborators (Alessandra Silveira and Pedro Madeira Froufe, professors and European law at the University of Minho). One of the solutions put forward appears inevitable in the current context of the enduring crisis in the Eurozone, namely that of reinforcing the federative components in the European project and giving shape to it in order to assert its legitimacy in a European public area that does not exist because the member states never wanted it to exist. The three editors drive this message home to its logical conclusion and state that the discourse regarding the European democratic deficit has become a comfortable one because it allows the national political elites to exempt themselves from any of the responsibility reserved for the European Union. This obviously needs to be said! The most novel idea can be located in the observation that the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice and the Charter of fundamental rights have progressively given birth to a “citizenship of rights”, namely a citizenship that provides rights other than those connected to the initial economic mobility and now creates a higher level of fundamental rights. It is not important whether these more elevated rights are European or recognised as such by an individual member state: on the basis of Article 53 of the Charter, any European citizen is within his rights to claim these as his or her own. Citizenship understood as such could therefore become the future of the Union, as well as a regenerated and reinvigorated European project. (Michel Theys)