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Is There Such a Thing as European Democracy

Abstract

The paper addresses a widely discussed problem of the democratic deficit in the European Union, the term referring to the fact that the European institutions substantially deviate from the political standards and rules that have been established in European nation states over a long period of time. The author takes the view that this deficit is indeed real and profound. What seems puzzling is why in the time of the omnipresence of democratic piety the clearly non-democratic tendency on a continental scale does not provoke a serious critical reaction in Europe, and does not delegitimize – as one might expect it should – the current course of the integration in the eyes of the European political class.

The author attempts to explain this somewhat surprising attitude and claims that the European Union with its democratic deficit reflects the European spirit as it has been developing during the last decades, in particular, since the 1968 counter-culture revolution. Its result was the blurring of the classical political and ideological divisions and the establishment of the so-called mainstream politics. The European Union as conceived and institutionalized today is the embodiment of the mainstream view of democracy.