

Press Release

What is the future of European cooperation? A new report *Making Flexible Europe Work: European Governance and the Potential of Differentiated Cooperation* by GLOBSEC experts explores this topic in more detail

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In the framework of a 2-year research project [DIFF GOV: European Governance: Potential of Differentiated Cooperation](#) implemented with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, and conducted by GLOBSEC's Policy Institute in collaboration with many experts from 20 Member States, the potential of flexible modes of cooperation among the EU Member States has been addressed.

Findings are presented in a new report *Making Flexible Europe Work: European Governance and the Potential of Differentiated Cooperation*. The publication consists of three parts. The first part explores possible scenarios of future European integration in four policy areas: economic cooperation, Schengen zone, Common Security and Defence Policy, and Foreign and Neighbourhood Policy. The second part presents the GLOBSEC expert poll from all 27 Member States scrutinising the countries' attitude towards such a cooperative model. The final part consists of tailored recommendations for policy makers on how European cooperation could be pursued through differentiated integration

Based on the publication, the majority of the EU Member States have indicated an openness towards differentiated cooperation if it can help fulfil national interests and provide freedom to participate in specific initiatives on a case by case basis. Despite divergent views, it seems like differentiated cooperation has steadily evolved to the point where it now appears to be the new normal in Europe. According to the presented expert poll, national policymakers across the EU are no longer debating whether their respective countries are proponents of flexible modes of cooperation but rather how they can play an influential and constructive role in an EU of different speeds. A vigorous discussion is also transpiring on how the various speeds and levels can best be managed to maintain EU cohesion. The question on whether, how much and where differentiation is necessary, sustainable and viable is, no doubt, political and connected to the European project as a whole.

The experts have agreed that an EU of multiple speeds already exists, however this doesn't mean a Europe of different speeds, is a divided Europe. This realisation should be embraced and explored as an opportunity, rather than a disadvantage, for a stronger and more cooperative Europe.

"The concept of multispeed Europe is often misunderstood. In order to face international competition, Europe must have aspiring goals and at the same time preserve cohesion. (...) It must be possible, therefore, for individual EU Member States to forge ahead on particular issues so that Europe can speed up. This flexibility permits the EU to react to current challenges and demonstrate its capacity to act even when not all Member States are on board," reads one of the conclusions from the country scorecards presented in the publication.

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During this 2-year project GLOBSEC explored the potential for flexible modes of cooperation between European Union member states in four areas: economic cooperation, Schengen zone, Common Security and Defence Policy, and Foreign and Neighbourhood Policy.

The project had three main goals: 1) to foster dialogue between researchers, experts and public administrations in order to enhance the governance of EU, 2) to contribute to a timely discussion on differentiated integration in Europe, with special attention paid to Central and Eastern Europe, 3) to bring also the European spirit closer to Slovak audience, trying to enhance understanding and appreciation of the importance of EU cooperation among the general public.



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