

## Solidarity and/or reciprocity: the North-South divide in times of permacrisis

### *DigiDem-EU WP3: Disinformation and narratives*

**Barcelona, 17 April, 2023**

CIDOB. Elisabets 12, 08001 Barcelona

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The capacity-building seminar “Solidarity and/or reciprocity: the North-South divide in times of permacrisis?” will analyse the evolution of the narratives on solidarity since the effects of the 2008 financial crisis scattered away. Other recent crises have been met with demands of solidarity from the EU and its member states. The COVID-19 pandemic was a first test for European solidarity and, while hesitant at first, the EU’s response in the form of the Next Generation EU and the EU Resilience and Recovery Fund showed what can be achieved when solidarity is a central element both in the narratives and policies. The perception of a shared vulnerability and the fact that the main origin of the Covid crisis hitting the EU was external -hence exempt from previous blame-games, helped articulating a common front. After the Russian aggression to Ukraine, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, solidarity was again in the spotlight. The EU activated the directive of temporary protection and Eastern European countries showed a wave solidarity towards Ukrainian refugees, far from the narratives and policies of 2015. However, in every crisis, it can be seen new and old divides arising, be it on the different approaches on whether sending heavy weapons to Ukraine or on the debates about diversifying energy suppliers or containing its prices during the summer of 2022. In every step, despite initial discussions and political pressures, solidarity has found its way.

Nevertheless, this correlation of events is bound to spark a reflection not only on the state of the North-South divide but on the rest of internal breaches putting the European Union under strain in times of permacrisis. What is the state of solidarity in the EU and between member states? What does solidarity mean? Is there a shared narrative about solidarity? How is solidarity perceived in different member states? Can Europeans embed it without the need of a trigger crisis? What mechanisms does the Union have to overcome crisis with solidarity?

This capacity-building seminar has two objectives, divided in two parts. The first objective is to have a collective reflection on how permacrisis is affecting the divides within the Union and whether there is a common narrative on solidarity and instruments in place to make it effective. For that end, a closed-door discussion among experts, from different European think tanks and academia, will debate on the different approaches to concept of solidarity and its translation into policies. The second objective is to promote new forms of civic and political participation by getting citizens define solidarity and allow them to engage in European debates. For that purpose, there will be a second part of the discussion opened to students interested in European affairs, where some of the experts of the seminar will engage with them in an informal roundtable to understand what younger generations think of solidarity in the European Union.



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the European Union**

- 11.30 - 11.35 **Welcome**  
**Pol Morillas**, Director, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
- 11.35 - 11.45 **Presentation of the initiative**  
**Héctor Sánchez Margalef**, Researcher, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
- 11.45 - 13.15 **Tacking stock: has the EU learnt the costs of less solidarity?**  
*Initial inputs*  
**Adriaan Schout**, Senior Research Fellow, Clingendael  
**Ilke Toygür**, Senior Associate, CSIS Europe  
**Carme Colomina**, Senior Research Fellow, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
- 13.15 – 14.30 **Working lunch**
- 14.30 – 16.00 **Narratives and instruments: how to make solidarity effective**  
*Initial inputs*  
**Hubert Heinelt**, Professor, TU Darmstadt  
**Eleonora Milazzo**, Joint Research Fellow, Egmont Institute and EPC  
**Juha Jokela**, Programme Director of the European Union research programme, FIIA
- 16.00 – 16.30 **Conclusions**  
**Héctor Sánchez Margalef**, Researcher, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

#### List of participants

- **Albert Aixalà**, Senior Policy Officer, Barcelona City Council
- **Diego Badell**, Researcher, IBEI
- **Dolors Camats**, Director, Fundació Catalunya Europa
- **Paola lo Cascio**, Associate Professor, Universitat de Barcelona (UB)
- **Irina Ciornei**, Ramón y Cajal Assistant Professor, IBEI
- **Carme Colomina**, Senior Research Fellow, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
- **Míriam Juan-Torres González**, Head of Research, Democracy & Belonging Forum from the Othering & Belonging Institute, UC Berkeley
- **Hubert Heinelt**, Professor, TU Darmstadt
- **Juha Jokela**, Programme Director of the European Union research programme, FIIA
- **Libby Maman**, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, TiGRE project, H2020, IBEI
- **Eleonora Milazzo**, Joint Research Fellow, Egmont Institute and EPC
- **Pol Morillas**, Director, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
- **Eva Ostergaard**, Professor, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)
- **Lluís Pérez Lozano**, Research Director, Fundació Irla
- **Matteo Pugliese**, PhD Researcher, Universitat de Barcelona (UB)
- **Héctor Sánchez Margalef**, Researcher, CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)
- **Jordi Santandreu**, Head of Projects, International Relations and Communication, Fundació Rafael Campalans
- **Adriaan Schout**, Senior Research Fellow, Clingendael
- **Miquel Seguró**, Associate Professor, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)
- **Ilke Toygür**, Senior Associate, CSIS Europe