

NEXTEUK Summer School 2022

14 June – 17 June

What research agenda(s) for post-Brexit and post-Covid EU studies?

From June 14th to June 17th the NEXTEUK project, co-funded by the European Union, will organise its second Summer School in partnership with the University of London Institute in Paris, the Directorate General for Communication and the European Parliamentary Research Service, and the Maison de l'Europe de Paris. The topic will be “What research agenda(s) for post-Brexit and post-Covid EU studies” and the Summer School will take place in Paris (ULIP)/Bazoches-sur Guyonne (Jean Monnet House).

Background to the thematic focus of the Summer School:

The past decade has shown that the EU has been increasingly exposed to uncertainties, unexpected events labelled as crises. In the recent years Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic have been additional tests for EU policies, polity and politics and have raised questions articulated around 7 major concepts:

1. **Crisis:** The EU seems to be in a “permanent state of emergency” (Ladi, Wolff, 2021) with critical junctures being far from exceptional. More knowledge could be produced on the EU’s resilience to crises: How does EU governance adapt to uncertainties? Are states of emergency at the EU level comparable to the domestic level? Are crisis-management mechanisms institutionalised once the critical junctures are over or are crises followed by a return to normal? Have crises proven to be new milestones for EU integration or have they endangered it?
2. **Sovereignty:** Following the UK’s withdrawal, motivated by a discourse around ‘taking back control’, new EU initiatives have been launched and the narrative of European sovereignty is on the rise as, for instance, a response for more strategic autonomy. COVID-19 has also made very clear the existing dependences of the EU towards third countries (for instance, in terms of supply chains or medical treatments). Will these events lead to new developments of EU sovereignty? How could they be articulated with national sovereignty which has remained a very strong guiding principle for EU member States? What is the current dominant understanding of sovereignty in the EU?
3. **Politicization and Expertise:** Both Brexit and the pandemic have shed light on the high level of politicization of European integration with strong polarised positions in this respect. Yet, experts play a key role in times of uncertainties such as during the Brexit negotiations or the management of a world disease. Such tensions lead to wonder how can politicisation and expertise interact: is politicisation a permanent feature of EU integration? Are politicisation and expertise necessarily incompatible, for example when one thinks about “technopopulism” (Bickerton, Accetti, 2021)?
4. **Trust:** The issue of trust has been central since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic at different levels. Firstly, EU citizens have shown higher levels of trust in the EU in comparison with their member State: will this trustful perception of the EU last over time, and will it lead to further integration? Secondly, trust also relates to the

interactions between national and EU decision-makers: if crises are a leap of faith between partners, have EU member States been able to trust each other and to trust EU institutions? Thirdly, trust is key in the relations established by the EU with third countries, including the UK: what tools does the EU possess to create trustful exchanges in very politicised environments?

5. **Institutions:** With Brexit, new governance structures around the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) have been created to deal with the UK's withdrawal and to organise the future relationship between the two partners. How will these new institutions work? New questions also appear in respect to the existing institutions. Brexit and COVID have led the European Commission to become more political, and to play a leading role in the withdrawal negotiations via the Task Force 50 (Schuette, 2021). The European Commission's leadership has also been very salient in the negotiations on the Recovery Facility Fund and during the negotiations of the NextGeneration EU. Do crises lead to major changes in the way EU institutions function?
6. **Europeanisation:** The recent events could lead to new conceptualisations of Europeanisation. This is the case for Brexit. Europe remains an important point of contention in the British landscape, but we see that de-Europeanisation is far from being a reality (Wolff and Piquet, forthcoming). There are diverse ways in which Britain has decided to disengage or to continue engagement in various policy areas and additional studies could focus on the following question: is Europeanisation still happening after a member state leaves the EU and through which channels? The pandemic has also demonstrated the relevance of new ways to capture the complexity of Europeanisation. Coordinative Europeanisation (Ladi, Wolff, 2021) is a good example of how the EU is now opting for pragmatic coordination with member States in times of crisis instead of opposing them. Is coordinative Europeanisation becoming a rule? What dynamics are identifiable across sectors in this respect? Is a renewal of the research agenda on Europeanisation required?
7. **Unity v. differentiated integration:** While the EU-UK relationship has importantly been analysed through the lens of disintegration and differentiated integration, some works also highlight the unity and cohesiveness brought by Brexit on the EU-27 (Chopin, Lequesne, 2020). In contrast, the uncoordinated answers of member States facing the pandemic (Wolff, Ripoll Servent, Piquet 2020) question the sense of unity of the EU. How can we explain such differences? To what extent and under what circumstances is the EU able to speak with one voice and as a unitarian actor? Furthermore, in the scholarly debate there has been disagreement over whether the UK's departure from the EU, combined with the disagreements between member states in the management of the pandemic, could lead to differentiated integration in various sectors (Schimmelfennig, 2020). Is differentiation the solution or the problem? Is differentiated integration possible in any dimension of European integration or should it be circumscribed?

The PhD summer School will revisit the impact of Covid and Brexit on the EU, and these 7 main concepts will drive the individual and collective reflection led during the Summer School around the new research agendas in EU studies. Debates on methodologies, theoretical challenges and empirical data will be addressed in order to fulfil what new research agenda emerge and will shape research in the field.

What to expect from the NEXTEUK PhD Summer School?

From June 14th to June 17th the participants will benefit from a two-day academic retreat at the [Jean Monnet House \(Bazoches-sur-Guyonne\)](#) followed by a two-day programme at Queen Mary in Paris (rue de Constantine).

They will enjoy an interactive learning experience based on:

- Live lectures and debate sessions with leading scholars and key policy-makers (examples from the 2021 NEXTEUK Summer School: Brigid Laffan (EUI), Frédéric Mérand (Montreal University), Philip Rycroft (former Permanent Secretary of the Department for Exiting the EU), Anand Menon (KCL and UK in a changing Europe), Tim Bale (QMUL), Elvire Fabry (Institut Jacques Delors), Agnès Alexandre-Collier (Univ. of Bourgogne) etc.).
- Individual presentations and collective discussions on participants' research project
- One-to-one sessions with leading scholars
- Skills training sessions
- Recreative community-building

Why should you apply?

The NEXTEUK PhD Virtual Summer School offers a **free of charge**, intensive, multidisciplinary (political science, international relations, law, business and management etc.) and participatory programme at an advanced academic level, in which PhD students and early career researchers interested in European studies will be provided a stimulating environment for intellectual exchange and academic training.

Participants will:

- Engage with key policymakers and leading international scholars to gain expertise on a diversity of content related to EU studies.
- Learn and discuss about the variety of theoretical and methodological tools that can be used to understand EU integration.
- Benefit from a benevolent environment to present their own research and receive individual and collective feedback from scholars and fellow students.
- Acquire and deepen academic skills among others how to write, present and publish a research paper, how to write their thesis, how to disseminate their research, how to discuss a research paper.
- Become part of a unique and long-lasting multicultural and multidisciplinary network of young scholars and senior researchers interested in the same topics
- Will have their accommodation and travel costs (up to a set limit) covered.

Who can apply?

The Summer School is mainly designed for PhD students and early career researchers in the field of EU studies. We are also able to consider some Master students or MRes who are intending to pursue a PhD.

The 13 successful applicants will demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Master's degree and research interest in the field of European integration and EU-UK relations
- Good working knowledge of English



- Availability throughout the entire programme
- Availability to submit a research proposal/article 3 weeks before the start of the Summer School and to participate in the different activities

How to apply?

Interested PhD students and early career researchers **can apply until March 23th, 23.59** on <https://qmul.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/application-for-the-2022-nexteuk-summer-school>.

A short presentation of the research proposal and motivation is expected.

Answers will be sent by late March.

Any question can be sent to a.piquet@qmul.ac.uk

Partners

This summer school is organised by the [Center for European Research](#) of Queen Mary University of London and is part of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence Project on the future of EU-UK relations [NEXTEUK](#). It is organised in partnership with the [University of London Institute in Paris.](#), [the European Parliament](#) (the Directorate General for Communication and the European Parliamentary Research Service) and the [Maison de l'Europe de Paris](#).

Organizers

This PhD Summer school is organised by [Dr. Sarah Wolff](#), PI of the NEXTEUK project and Director of the CER and [Dr. Agathe Piquet](#), post-doctoral and project manager at NEXTEUK.

References:

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Chopin Th., Lequesne Ch., 2020, “Disintegration Reversed: Brexit and the Cohesiveness of the EU27”, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 29:3, 419-431.

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