



# Report of the 2021 DiCE Networking Conference on Brexit





The DiCE Networking Conference on Brexit took place on the 11th and 12th of March in a virtual format. The conference gathered experts and stakeholders from policymaking, civil society and academia, as well as a ‘witness panel’ with stakeholders involved in the Brexit negotiations. The conference focussed on the distinction between internal and external differentiation and on the role of Brexit for the future of the European Union (EU) in general and the effects on differentiation research in particular. The conference was organised by John Erik Fossum (ARENA Centre for European Studies – UiO), Brigid Laffan (European University Institute) and Nicoletta Pirozzi (Istituto Affari Internazionali).

# Day 1

The first day of the conference was opened by the conference organisers who thanked everyone involved in organisation of the conference, especially in adapting to the virtual format of the sessions. In the introductory remarks, the organisers briefly described the three EU-funded research projects on differentiation and the dynamics of integration under the umbrella of DiCE: Integrating Diversity in the European Union (InDivEU), EU Integration and Differentiation for Effectiveness and Accountability (EU IDEA), and EU Differentiation, Dominance and Democracy (EU3D). Brigid Laffan, co-coordinator (together with Frank Schimmelfennig, ETH Zurich) of InDivEU, highlighted the importance of looking at Brexit as the crossover from internal differentiation to external differentiation. Nicoletta Pirozzi, coordinator of EU IDEA, emphasised that Brexit is a great example of differentiation in three key areas: economic governance, security and defence, and migration. Finally, John Erik Fossum, coordinator of EU3D, stressed the significance of developing a theory of differentiation that specifies the conditions under which differentiation is politically acceptable, institutionally sustainable and democratically legitimate, and the conditions under which it is not. This undertaking of course includes external differentiation and Brexit figures centrally in that undertaking. John Erik Fossum also introduced the keynote speaker of the session: Jean-Claude Piris (Former Director General of the EU Council's Legal Service; Consultant in EU law and Politics and Public International Law).

## Opening keynote speech by Jean-Claude Piris

### Moderator:



John Erik Fossum (ARENA Centre for Europea Studies – UiO)

### Speaker:



Jean-Claude Piris (Former Director General of the EU Council's Legal Service; Consultant in EU law and Politics and Public International Law).

Jean-Claude Piris began by outlining two key points of his speech. Firstly, the inevitability of Brexit, as the EU would not meet the demands of the United Kingdom (UK) in providing more differentiation and less integration. While the UK was among the most serious and attentive members of the EU, its political objectives, such as the protection of sovereignty of the EU member states, was preventing any further integration reforms within the EU. He also highlighted the importance of history, geography, cultural singularity and British identity in the Brexit referendum. He acknowledged that the hard Brexit results of the negotiations were to be expected and expressed his pessimism with regards to finding a system of differentiation that would bring the UK closer to the EU any time soon.

Secondly, the incapability of the current institutional framework of the EU to meet the demands of all the 27 member states and efficiently face up to arising crises. Jean-Claude Piris emphasised issues relating to fracturing of the respect for the rule of law among the member states, the need for structural reform, solidarity in terms of climate change and migration policy, as well as the importance of the EU becoming a credible actor in the international arena. All of these issues have to be tackled before any future enlargements and if the EU wants to avoid becoming less relevant internally and externally. Subsequently, he presented three options for addressing these concerns: 1) transformation of the Euro area into an ‘avant-garde cooperation’ characterised by the transfer of power from the nation states to the (more democratised) EU; 2) establishment of new ‘basic clubs’ in accordance with existing treaties and institutions (e.g. single market club or foreign policy club); and 3) strengthening of the EU unity through reformation of the veto powers and allowing more possibility for internal differentiation. Jean-Claude Piris rejected the two former options and argued for the third. In doing so, he underlined that the EU requires more political power if it is to prove its relevance and deliver on its promises more robustly (e.g. climate change or Covid-19 response). In conclusion, he acknowledged the difficulties of achieving these goals but stressed that “the day had come to recognise that genuine reforms are necessary.”

Jean-Claude Piris’ contribution was received with great enthusiasm by the online audience which posed questions related to the future of the UK-EU relationship and EU reform strategies.

## Roundtable 1

### Brexit in comparison: models of differentiated (dis)integration

#### Moderator:



Kalypso Nicolaïdis (Oxford University)

#### Speakers:



Meltem Müftüler-Baç  
(Sabanci University)



John Erik Fossum  
(ARENA Centre for European  
Studies – UiO)



Christian Frommelt  
(Liechtenstein Institute)



Nanette Neuwahl  
(University of Montreal)

Kalypso Nicolaïdis opened the first roundtable of the conference by thanking the speakers for their participation and contributions and explaining the format of the session: a discussion based around three key questions posed by the moderator. The first question related to the relevance of existing models of differentiation by asking *“which model out there is the most similar to the UK’s relationship with the EU and which would be preferred by different actors, including nations within the UK?”*

Meltem Müftüler-Baç started off the discussion by sharing insights on Turkey as an example of external differentiation. In doing so, she stressed that the two cases (UK and Turkey) differ significantly due to Turkey’s EU membership aspirations and UK’s leaving the Union. Nonetheless, in designing the new EU-UK relationship, the EU-Turkey relations may offer some lessons in terms of trade relations, security, and migration. Nanette Neuwahl continued by explaining the case of EU-Canada cooperation as potentially the most relevant example of the future EU-UK relationship. The ‘Canada model’ is characterised by: a deep trade agreement covering a substantial number of policy areas; it contributes to rules based on the international trading order; provides institutional structures allowing for timing of information between parties and effective dispute settlements; and preserves the freedom of parties to legislate. John Erik Fossum agreed with Nanette Neuwahl and added that it is not just the models that are of significance but also internal politics. He pointed out that whereas the Norway model was discussed by different UK actors, the two arrangements are configured for different purposes. The Norway model is designed to help foster further Norwegian inclusion in EU programs whereas the TCA is designed for managing EU-UK divergence. He also noted that the devolved governments in Scotland and Northern Ireland will be seeking a closer relationship with the EU. Christian Frommelt highlighted the crucial importance of definitional and executional ambiguity of models of differentiated integration (e.g. the Swiss model within the EEA). Different institutional procedures change and diverge over time and this is likely to be a feature of the EU-UK relationship.

The second question asked by the moderator concerned the UK’s departure as a case of disintegration: *“is Brexit a complete outlier as a case of disintegration and managed divergence, the centrifugal exception from all the EU’s other external relations? Or do we find instances of resistance to convergence elsewhere, whether in terms of domestic political pressures in the third country or on the part of the EU itself? And, could there be contagion between third countries in this regard?”*

Christian Frommelt began by acknowledging that external differentiated integration is always about managing diversity and heterogeneity. He pointed out that until 2014 there were hardly any examples of disintegration among the European Economic Area (EEA) states – all EEA states were actively engaged in all EU programs. However, since 2014, EEA member states have been participating in the EU programs selectively. Christian Frommelt also stressed the difficulties of external differentiation to keep up with the legislative dynamics of European integration, which consequently might be contributing to the widening of a gap between the EU and the EEA states. Echoing Jean-Claude Piris’ keynote speech, Meltem Müftüler-Baç highlighted that politics matter in shaping state relationships and in doing so stressed the importance of acknowledging the multiple domestic and international forces shaping political rhetoric and action. Nanette Neuwahl offered an elaboration on the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) between the EU and the UK, emphasising the uniqueness of the TCA as a treaty for managing divergence. Consequently, while the treaty closely resembles the EU-Canada relationship it can also serve as a new model that might prove useful in the case of another member leaving the EU. John Erik Fossum complemented the ongoing debate on political dynamics by pointing out that in all member states there are minorities that are against the current EU arrangements. Their motivation can be summarised by three points: identity (sovereignty), assessments of cost-benefits of the current and alternative arrangements, and risk and uncertainty of changing the affiliation. He also pointed to the importance, and fragility, of political mechanisms designed to prevent disintegration. The tangled process of Brexit has made actors in affiliated non-member states focus on the risks and uncertainties associated with altering their EU affiliation, but the question is whether the stabilisation of EU-UK relations will give momentum to different political mobilisations demanding alternative arrangements.

The final question of the roundtable was *“to what extent do various kinds of relationships with the EU leave the necessary space for these states to negotiate arrangements that are particularly suitable to them through differentiated and customised arrangements? Are we witnessing a backlash against such differentiated approaches on the part of the EU under the accusation of ‘cherry picking’ and fear of outside-in contagion?”*

Meltem Müftüleri-Baç commenced by remarking that the EU cannot enlarge endlessly. Finding different modalities to incorporate those countries that are ready to cooperate with the EU on different areas and politics will be beneficial to the EU. Different modalities therefore enable much more efficient ways of dealing with the challenge the EU is facing (e.g. migration and global governance). Consequently, EU membership does not have to be the absolute prerequisite for cooperating with the EU. Organised and formalised forms of differentiation with non-member countries can allow the EU to act more efficiently. Nanette Neuwahl followed by outlining the example of EU-Canada relations and the importance of long-term scoping exercises, allowing for a mutual assessment of objectives prior to trade negotiations. She pointed out that such scoping exercises were absent prior to the EU-UK TCA. The EU-UK agreement also suffered from the top-down handling of the negotiations by the UK government and within a context of a deeply divided country. Christian Frommelt addressed the ‘cherry picking’ practices within the EEA by stating that the basic principles for external differentiated integration have not changed over the last three decades. This is due to the EU wanting to defend the autonomy of its decision-making process, its legal order, and balance of benefits and obligations. However, he also highlighted that recent years have seen examples of ‘cherry picking’ by EEA members, such as Lichtenstein and Iceland, which managed to opt out or delay participation in particular programs. In the final contribution, John Erik Fossum explained the EU’s approach to structuring its external relations with other state actors. The EU has reconfigured state sovereignty so that participation in common EU institutions is a key aspect of EU membership. Affiliated states of course cannot participate in EU law and decision-making but can participate in the EU’s internal market with reciprocal rights and obligations. The more included they are, the more compelling the system of monitoring and sanctions. The question for Brexit is to what extent this logic will be extended to the UK’s relationship with the EU.

The roundtable culminated with a Q&A session. Questions from the audience related to how the internal UK divisions might impact the future relations with the EU; the importance of political sociology pertaining to the internal socio-economic and cultural factors that shape a mode of EU-affiliation; the ongoing pandemic; as well as the implications for agreements between the UK, the EU and third country partners such as Turkey and Switzerland. In closing Day 1 of the conference, Kalypso Nicolaïdis highlighted the importance of identifying and analysing emerging patterns in institutional structures in post-Brexit Europe and thanked all the speakers and participants for their contribution.

# Day 2

The second day of the conference consisted of two Roundtable Panels and one Witness Panel, culminating with concluding remarks by the conference organisers. Nicoletta Pirozzi commenced the day by outlining the day's schedule and thanking the speakers for their contribution and participation in the conference.

## Roundtable II

### Brexit next: the future of EU integration and EU-UK relations

#### Moderator:



Christopher Lord  
(University of Oslo; ARENA Centre for European Studies)

#### Speakers:



Brigid Laffan  
(European University  
Institute)



Hussein Kassim  
(University of East Anglia)



Vivien A. Schmidt  
(University of Boston)



Fabian Zuleeg  
(European Policy Centre)

Christopher Lord started off the session by thanking and introducing all the speakers and explaining the question-based format of the session. The first question of the roundtable concerned the TCA agreement: *“is it stable, is it sufficient and is it a thin agreement? And if it is a thin agreement why is it so?”*

Hussein Kassim opened the discussion by stating that the agreement is thin and acknowledging that this is due to practical and ideological reasons. The UK negotiation strategy was characterised by indecision and determination to not prolong the transition period. He highlighted the potential future flashpoints in areas such as energy and fishery but also expressed his optimism with regards to the possibility of developing systems enabling interaction and cooperation between the EU and the UK. Building on this response, Vivien Schmidt pointed out the difficulties of the negotiation process and the loss of mutual trust, which set the stage for a hard Brexit. She shared her perspective on the future of the EU-UK relations and outlined a number of issues of contestation related to human rights, security policy, Covid-19, and the state of UK internal politics emphasizing the importance of economy: *“after taking out the cultural dimension of Brexit, will the economic interests win out in the end?”* Fabian

Zuleeg contributed by stating that the reason for such a thin agreement was the congestion on both sides of the table caused by factors such as UK domestic politics, control and diversion, and the EU hopes for a more ambitious agreement. He acknowledged that, from the perspective of the EU, the TCA is a well-designed technical treaty aimed at avoiding future contestation. However, the treaty is not perceived favourably in the UK and therefore the EU-UK relationship is destined to deteriorate. He also pointed out that the TCA is only one – albeit important – element of the Brexit process. In the final response, Brigid Laffan agreed with the previous speakers in recognising the uniqueness of the process and how the economic argument was overshadowed by the ‘sovereignty’ factor. Furthermore, she elaborated on the importance of ‘red lines’ during the negotiation period. While each side signalled their ‘red lines’ early on in the negotiation process, the UK government underestimated the tenacity of the EU in terms of its ‘red lines’ (e.g. integrity of the single market, balance between rights and obligations). Brigid Laffan also stressed the instability of the agreement in relation to Northern Ireland and the fact that the UK government does not accept the legitimacy of the EU as a political actor (e.g. it is treating the Union as an international organisation).

Building on this discussion, the second question of the roundtable was *“what are the prospects for building on the agreement in the future?”*

Fabian Zuleeg began by outlining the positive and negative characteristics of the agreement. The positives relate to the fact that the TCA is designed to be built upon, should there be enough political will on both sides. The global challenges and interests of the partners, such as climate change and unilateralism, offer possibilities for further cooperation. The negatives concern the ‘Trumpian’ faction in the UK government, which does not consider the EU a legitimate actor – the preference there is on cooperation with sovereign states rather than international organisations. Consequently, he stressed the importance of UK internal politics and *“who is steering them.”* Brigid Laffan concurred that the TCA can be built upon but pointed out that its future is uncertain. The immediate challenges concern stabilisation and depoliticization of the Northern Ireland issue, as well as operationalisation of the TCA itself. She also emphasised the importance of the UK’s economic growth as this will determine the willingness and degree of the UK cooperation with the EU. Vivien Schmidt turned the focus of the debate to the EU by asking *“how does the EU evolve? And whether the transformation within the EU will make it easier for the UK to deal with it?”* In addressing these questions, she referred to the conference’s opening keynote speech by Jean-Claude Piris. If the EU’s future relies on establishing new differentiation strategies (e.g. EU Clubs, clusters of communities and policies, supermajorities) then there is space for further cooperation between the UK and the EU. Building on the importance of institutional transformation, Hussein Kassim pointed out that the UK is in a state of flux as it is increasingly leaning towards centralisation of its governance. He also underscored the nationalist and anti-EU tendencies of the UK electorate, echoing earlier debates on the importance of culture and ideology in the Brexit process and the fact that the Labour Party offers little viable political alternatives.

The last question of the panel asked about the nature of EU-UK relations: *“which is more likely: a cooperative relationship or a conflictual one?”*

Brigid Laffan started off by observing that unlike most treaty negotiations, the end of the Brexit talks was characterised by a sense of doom and gloom rather than joy. The future of the EU-UK relationship is therefore looking conflictual, and it will depend on the final ratification of the deal by the EU. However, she also underlined the importance of the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, both of which require a coordinated response, opening up a possibility for cooperation. Vivien Schmidt shared the concerns voiced by Brigid Laffan and added that the UK government seems to be poised to demonstrate its strength and sovereignty above all else. Consequently, in line with the Brexit negotiations, the future of the EU-UK relationship is not about international treaties but rather inward focusing. Further, she pointed out the ongoing politicization of the Covid-19 pandemic. Hussein Kassim concurred that the future



relationship is looking problematic. He shared his bewilderment with regards to the apparent limited communication between the UK government, businesses and civil services. The last speaker, Fabian Zuleeg, reflected on the different levels and networks of cooperation. While the political level might look conflictual, collaboration in other sectors might still take place. He concluded by stressing the political repercussions of Brexit for EU member states: *“differentiation works better when you’re inside the club, rather than when you’re outside of it. This is a lesson for all EU states.”*

Following the second roundtable of the conference, the Q&A session concentrated on the politicisation of the vaccine roll out in Europe, as well as the importance of political narratives in shaping the short- and long-term future of the EU-UK relationship. The speakers also elaborated further on the risks related to the Northern Ireland border, the importance of political opposition in the UK, and the possibility of a bottom up push for greater collaboration with the EU.

## Roundtable III

### What role for the United Kingdom in a post-Brexit world?

#### Moderator:



Julie Smith (University of Cambridge, member of the UK House of Lords)

#### Speakers:



Ian Bond  
(Centre for European Reform)



Michael Keating  
(University of Aberdeen)



Federico Fabbrini  
(Dublin City University)



Jo Shaw  
(University of Edinburgh)

Julie Smith opened the last roundtable of the conference by welcoming everyone and introducing the speakers. She also took the time to congratulate the coordinators for the well-organised conference and assembling an impressive set of speakers. The first question of the panel was directed at internal UK politics: *“will the UK stay united post-Brexit? Or might the UK differentiate internally in its relations to the EU?”*

Michael Keating commenced the debate by outlining a set of issues with regard to the state of UK politics. Firstly, Brexit is about an *“obsession with sovereignty”*, both internally and externally, and therefore it is about restructuring of the UK as a sovereign state. Secondly, the restructuring ambitions

are met with resistance, especially in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Thirdly, is the deepening of the societal divide within the English electorate. Consequently, it is hard to predict the future of the UK's internal unity. Following on this response, Jo Shaw elaborated on the tensions in the field of legal development (e.g. turn to illiberal constitutionalism) and institutional change (e.g. upcoming review of the human rights act). Federico Fabbrini pointed out that there's no post-Brexit world as the process is ongoing, and underscored the importance of the Northern Ireland question in shaping not only internal UK politics but also transatlantic relations. He also questioned the willingness of the UK government to honour its obligations in terms of the Northern Ireland special regulatory zone and expressed his concerns for the stability of the sub-state. Ian Bond echoed all the previous responses and contributed by pointing to the rising separatist tendencies not only in Scotland, but also Wales. He concluded by observing that the more the UK government is trying to impose its rule, the more support this generates in Scotland and Wales.

The second question of the last panel concerned the external view of the UK: *“which image may prevail, if any, of Global Britain versus Little England?”*

Jo Shaw began by highlighting the importance of the novel 'EU relations law' and the proposed review of human rights treaties and how this will affect the UK's relationship with the EU as well as the rest of the world. Dr. Shaw also argued that the ongoing axing of research funds will impact UK's academia, which is an integral part of the 'Global Britain' brand. Ian Bond followed up by emphasising the significance of the upcoming security and defence reviews in the UK. The reviews will shed light on how the UK positions itself not only in terms of defence but also development and international relations. He expects that the focus will be on transatlantic and Far East partnerships as alternatives to EU relations. He also shared his concerns with regard to the prospect of the UK leaving the European Council of Human Rights (ECHR) and how the UK government is underestimating its connection to the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland. Federico Fabbrini provided some observations on the irony underpinning the Global Britain and Little England dichotomy. On the one hand, Brexit was strongly supported by the right-wing side of the Conservative party, which endorses the idea of 'Global Britain'. On the other, it was supported by the English working class (the 'new blue wall'), which opposes globalisation. The challenge for the UK government is to find a compromise here. Michael Keating contributed by reflecting on the importance of geopolitics and security. He identified a conflict between the ambitions of Global Britain and unilateralism with regard to the UK's international military presence. He also emphasised that the idea of Global Britain has varied support among the UK nations – it is mainly popular in England.

Following the roundtable debate, moderator Julie Smith opened the Q&A session. The questions asked by the audience related to British commitment to unilateralism and its involvement in NATO, devolution settlements among the UK nations, and the role of Scotland for the future of the UK.

## Witness panel

### The view from stakeholders involved in Brexit

#### Moderator:



Nicoletta Pirozzi (Istituto Affari Internazionali)

#### Speakers:



Jill Rutter  
(Senior Research Fellow,  
UK in a Changing Europe)



Georgina Wright  
(Head of Institute Montaigne's  
Europe Program)



Declan Kelleher  
(former Permanent Repre-  
sentative of Ireland to the  
UN, former Ambassador of  
Ireland to China)



Stefaan de Rynck  
(Senior Advisor of Michel  
Barnier, and Head of Euro-  
pean Commission Repre-  
sentation in Brussels)

Nicoletta Pirozzi started off the session by thanking all the conference participants for their attendance and involvement over the course of the conference and introduced the panel's speakers. Further, she explained the specific format of the session, which focused on exchanging personal experiences and opinions of the speakers on Brexit and the EU-UK relations. Nicoletta Pirozzi opened the discussion by asking the speakers *“what were the main obstacles in the negotiation process? What did go wrong and what did go well?”*

Stefaan de Rynck began by reflecting on the personal connections that have been established and re-established during the process. He emphasised that one of the positive aspects of Brexit was the unity and solidarity of the EU member states, which reaffirmed the value of EU membership. He also praised Michel Barnier's 'Brexit Staircase' in providing a clear stance of the EU on the future relationship with the UK. Declan Kelleher followed by reminiscing on Ireland's Brexit strategy, which proved successful irrespective of the difficulties posed by its in-between status to the EU and the UK. He also pointed out a set of challenges during the Brexit process, concentrating on Theresa May's government policy ambiguity and the lack of familiarity with the intricacies of the Good Friday Agreement. He concluded that the main negative was Brexit itself, especially for the EU and Ireland. Georgina Wright contributed by recognising that the Brexit sequencing proposed by the EU surprised the UK negotiators, resulting in a lack of vision and focus on their part. In doing so, the UK appeared to not realise the differences between negotiating as a member of the EU and as a third country partner. She also reflected on France's position within the process, which was characterised by president Macron's focus on the EU reformation plan and not on Brexit itself. Jill Rutter disagreed with Stefaan de Rynck on Barnier's 'Brexit Staircase' regarding it as destabilising and a 'failure of imagination.' However, she conceded that the EU played a 'tactical blinder' in the

negotiations and that the deal was a success for the union. She pointed out that the UK approach to Brexit was characterised by disunity among its nations and that the Theresa May government didn't realise the significance of Northern Ireland in the Brexit talks.

Nicoletta Pirozzi initiated the second part of the debate by posing two interlinked questions regarding post-Brexit period in the UK and the future of EU-UK relations: *“what is the current state of UK internal politics and governance as well as its international reputation? And how will it affect the future relationship with the EU? What is left to be addressed in terms of EU-UK partnership (e.g. financial sector, foreign and security policy)? What is the future of the relationship?”*

Jill Rutter commenced by concentrating on the view from within the UK. In the short run, the British government is in a sensitive state where the government has to prove that it made the right decision. In the long run, she believes that the current tensions between the UK and the EU will not only stabilise, but that there's a potential for future cooperation. In particular, the upcoming G7 summit and COP27 conference present opportunities for strengthening existing and building up future relationships. However, she stressed that there are possible hurdles in this process arising from certain factions of the Conservative Party. Georgina Wright followed up by acknowledging that the initial implementation of the deal was always going to be difficult. She then posed a rhetorical question on whether the two sites, despite different ambitions, can afford to think cooperatively in terms of the future. In doing so, she emphasised the importance of understanding, and communicating, the needs and requirements of each site clearly and constructively. Declan Kelleher contributed by pointing out the importance of Ireland, its border with Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement. He reflected on the bewilderment in Ireland caused by the UK negotiation strategy with regards to these issues. Declan Kelleher also argued the need for moving towards a new multilateral relationship between the two nations. Stefaan de Rynck returned to the notion of Barnier's 'Brexit staircase' by highlighting that it was intended as a clear expression of the EU's negotiating position and that the UK underestimated EU's onus on protecting its biggest asset – the single market. He also shared his views over the future of policy competition between the EU and the UK, stressing that contentions are inevitable given the promises made by Boris Johnson. The future of the EU-UK relationship, according to his view, depends largely on the UK, as it needs to decide whether it wants to diverge or develop policies in line with EU regulations.

Following the debate, Nicoletta Pirozzi turned to the audience in order to collect questions. The remaining discussion revolved around the establishment of a stable framework for future cooperation between the EU-UK, the likelihood of the Northern Ireland protocol being undermined, and the role of the EU in assessing the future UK regulatory compatibility.

## Concluding Remarks

### Speakers:



Nicoletta Pirozzi  
(Istituto Affari Internazionali)



John Erik Fossum  
(ARENA Centre for European  
Studies – UiO)



Brigid Laffan  
(European University Institute)

In the concluding remarks, Nicoletta Pirozzi thanked everyone involved in the conference and outlined how the inputs received throughout the sessions will be used in a ‘Scenario Marathon’ exercise conducted by DiCE. The ideas developed through the scenario studies conducted in the three sister projects EU IDEA, InDivEU and EU3D will be tested in a ‘Scenario Marathon’ with policy makers within the EU in order to provide new perspectives on differentiation strategies, including in relation to Brexit. John Erik Fossum highlighted the value of bringing together scholars not only under one Horizon project, but the umbrella of three research projects. The changing political order of the EU requires collective efforts, and this conference served as a great exercise and example of it. He also invited everyone to take part in DifferentiGate – a new database webpage aimed at collecting publications concerning differentiation strategies, models and policy aspects of it. The resulting internet archive will be available on the DICE website, directed at academics, students and policy makers. Lastly, Brigid Laffan, reflected on the successful implementation of a unique conference formula, which combined virtual format with question-driven panels spread across two days. She emphasised the importance and relevance of looking at Brexit as a case study of differentiated integration. In doing so, she pointed to the distinctive nature of the EU-UK relationship and how Brexit, and its ongoing aftermath, will also impact the future interaction between the Union and its member states. Brigid Laffan concluded by stressing the significance of academic legacy, not only in terms of publications, but also as institutionalised assets. Consequently, she encouraged further collaboration and invited everyone to become a member of the newly established, on initiative of Sandra Kröger, Research Network on Differentiated Integration in the EU under the aegis of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR).

