

**Abstract**

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**Voices of Europe's "Second Speed":  
Populism in the East**

Following the political crises that have hampered the European project in recent years, the European Commission has published, on the 1st of March 2017, the document titled "White Paper on the Future of Europe. Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025". The paper proposed five scenarios that the Commission encouraged all those interested to focus upon, in an attempt to redefine the European Union by understanding its current weaknesses, and by focusing on its strengths – which are expected to define the future trajectory of the project. The European Commission has organized public debates in all Member States, an effort that was primarily oriented towards encouraging the public to express its points of view. It is in this context that one particular scenario has raised concerns in Eastern European countries, i.e. "Scenario 3: Those Who Want More Do More" – better known as the "Multi-speed Europe Scenario", which has been viewed as an attempt to shrink the access to the decision-making process, with those who have only recently joined the EU (in 2004, 2007 and then 2013) being left outside of what would become the new "coalitions of the willing". Populist parties in Eastern Europe have seized the moment and accused Brussels of undermining European unity and creating second-class citizens. Drawing on the results of a comprehensive online survey promoted via SNS and conducted among Eastern European citizens, the current paper taps into a variety of issues related to how the future of the EU is perceived and how nationalism reclaims its central role in redefining identities within the debate about the future of Europe.