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EDITORIAL

The co-editors and the Editorial Team are delighted to present the eighth issue of the Latin American Journal of European Studies. This journal is a publication of the Latin American Center of European Studies (LACES), currently supported by the Jean Monnet Network Policy Debate “BRIDGE Watch: Values and Democracy in the EU and Latin America,” co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. As an open-access, double-blind peer-reviewed journal, it publishes articles in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, twice a year. Its primary aim is to generate new knowledge, foster dialogue, and exchange best practices between the European Union and Latin America, with a steadfast commitment to promoting economic and social development, peace, and international security.

In this issue, in addition to contributions under the editorial lines “European Union Law and Policies” and “International Relations of the European Union with Third Countries and Latin America,” readers will find legal writings on the theme “Paths to Democracy: Lessons from the European Union and Latin America”. This topic was the focus of the current Thematic Dossier and the VIII Jean Monnet Network Seminar – BRIDGE, held from October 14th to 16th, 2024, at the National University of Asunción (UNA), Paraguay.

The event included a Seminar and a Workshop on “Paths to Democracy: Lessons from the European Union and Latin America”. Distinguished authorities and experts shared their insights, including Carlos Francisco Molina del Pozo (University of Alcalá, Spain), Diego Moreno Rodríguez (Inter-American Court of Human Rights), Jorge Enrique Bogarín González (Superior Court of Electoral Justice of Paraguay), José María Costa Ruiz (Journalist and Director of Transparency and Public Access to Information at the Supreme Court of Justice of Paraguay), and María Elodia Almirón Prujel (Civil, Commercial, and Labor Court of Appeals of Central, Paraguay).

The workshop featured the presentation of 15 papers selected through the Call for Papers, along with the 4th Jean Monnet Prize for Social Sciences winner. Contributions were submitted by authors from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Portugal, and Spain. The papers were carefully chosen by the Scientific Committee, which included Roberto Ruiz Díaz Labrano (Nacional University of Asunción, Paraguay), Aline Beltrame de Moura (Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil), Nuno Cunha Rodrigues (Lisbon University, Portugal). Some of the papers presented were selected for publication in this issue of the Journal.

The first paper, written by Liliana Bertoni and Elizabeth Accioly, is entitled "El rumbo de las democracias en la segunda veintena del siglo XXI" (The Direction of Democracies in the 21st Century). Their research aims to address the state of democracies during this period of global transition, which has been well underway since the beginning of the 21st century. From a critical perspective, the authors analyze the emergence of a new democratic order on the old continent, with repercussions that might potentially disrupt the European project as it was conceived by Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman more than seven decades ago.

The second article, written by Guillermo Irigoitia and Rodolfo Rivas, is entitled "La experiencia europea y su rol en la consolidación de las democracias del MERCOSUR: historia y desafíos actuales" (The European Experience and Its Role in the Consolidation of MERCOSUR Democracies: History and Current Challenges). In this research, the authors explore both the predominant perspective that views democratic institutions as a prerequisite for integration and the role of integration itself—analyzed through a historical and geopolitical lens—as a significant catalyst for the emergence of contemporary freedoms. The article also addresses the current and future challenges related to this dynamic.

The next article, entitled "Las Cortes Europea y Latinoamericana de protección de Derechos Humanos; génesis, características y diferencias" (The European and Latin American Courts for the protection of Human Rights: Genesis, characteristics and differences) was written by Manuel Becerra, and analyzes the European model of human rights protection, which has undergone a fast evolution in the

twentieth century to create a rather complex and all-encompassing institution. Afterward, it provides a dogmatic description of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, understanding that the Latin American model, although it also takes the original European model of a dual control system of the American Convention with an Inter-American Commission and Court, has gone its own way to form a new and original system.

In the following paper, the author Ginette Isabel Rodrigo Romero discusses “La accesibilidad y no discriminación en el Derecho Internacional: reflexiones a favor de los derechos de las personas con discapacidad” (Accessibility and Non-Discrimination in Favor of People with Disabilities: Reflections from International Law). The analysis focuses on examining the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and accessibility in international law, particularly in relation to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006. In conclusion, the author argues that accessibility provides both legal and material content to the principle of equality through strategies that approach disability from a social model, recognizing the equal dignity and rights of all human beings.

The article by Dulce María Domínguez Gaona, Jorge Antonio Breceda Pérez, and Luz Daniela Natividad Molina, titled “Límites a la reelección política y su impacto en la gobernanza local” (Limits on Political Re-Election and Its Impact on Local Governance), focuses on the effects of the 2014 political-electoral reform in Mexico, which allowed the consecutive re-election of mayors. It contrasts these effects with the benefits and challenges of indefinite re-election in Europe. The main objective of the text is to examine how limits on re-election influence administrative stability, efficiency, and accountability in local governance while seeking to identify international practices that can be adapted to the Mexican context. The authors conclude that re-election can be a powerful instrument to promote continuity and administrative stability, but requires mechanisms of transparency, accountability, and robust supervision to avoid clientelist practices.

In Mexico, the implementation of international best practices could strengthen local governance without compromising political renewal.

Alejandra Díaz's paper, titled "¿Es posible que los procesos de integración puedan detener la degradación democrática en los estados que la integran? Un análisis del caso europeo?" (Is it possible that integration processes can stop democratic degradation in the states that include it? An analysis of the European case), analyzes that, although democratic regimes continue to be valued positively by much of the Western world, other experiences have regressed to systems that can hardly be identified as democratic. The European Union has not escaped this phenomenon, with Hungary and Poland serving as two paradigmatic examples. However, upon analysis, the authors conclude that within the integration scheme, there are mechanisms that have limited the advance of democratic regression. European institutions and regulations that defend democratic values through multiple actions have managed to contain the autocratic tendencies observed in the aforementioned cases.

Maximiliano Mendieta and Shirley Franco's paper, titled "Situación de los países del MERCOSUR en materia de política ambiental y su relación con la Unión Europea en el marco del Acuerdo de Escazú" (Situation of MERCOSUR countries in terms of environmental policy and their relationship with the European Union in the framework of the Escazú Agreement) investigates the effects of the situation of the Mercosur countries in terms of environmental policy and their relationship with the European Union (EU) within the framework of the Escazú Agreement. The results indicate that although the Mercosur countries have a robust legal system of legislative policies on environmental matters, the real problem lies in the non-compliance with the rules and other variables, such as corruption.

Danielle de Ouro Mamed, Cecílio Arnaldo Rivas Ayala and Ener Vaneski Filho presented a paper titled "Derecho socioambiental y comunidades tradicionales en América Latina: aportes para pensar el problema del neoextractivismo (Socioenvironmental law and traditional communities in Latin America: contributions

to thinking about the problem of neoextractivism). The article addresses the confrontation of traditional communities in Latin America with the problems caused by neoextractivism, from the perspective of socio-environmental law. The authors justify the theme by highlighting the difficulties observed by traditional (non-indigenous) communities in guaranteeing their territorial rights, despite being long recognized as guardians of nature. The paper aims to verify whether a more appropriate treatment of the issue is necessary in terms of environmental public policies, with special attention to the processes of neoextractivism.

The article titled "Microsegmentación y manipulación. La urgente regulación de la IA en campañas electorales para la protección de la autonomía de los votantes" (Microsegmentation and manipulation. The urgent regulation of ai in election campaigns to protect voter autonomy) authored by Evelyn Téllez Carvajal, Abed Ieshua López Graniel, and Valeria Estefanía Goche Mata, reflects on voter autonomy concerning the use of AI in electoral campaigns and the limits on the use of these technologies to ensure people's freedom to choose. This work highlights the detrimental use of Artificial Intelligence in undermining autonomous citizen participation, employing documentary analysis and comparing actions taken in different regions to address voter manipulation through social networks. Among the findings, the lack of knowledge on the issue among voters and a distrust of electoral organizations and institutions stand out. As a proposed solution, the authors advocate for promoting digital literacy connected to democracy.

Marta Isabel Cenese de Estigarribia and Cecilia Vuyk's paper "Desafíos y avances en la implementación de los mecanismos de gobernanza participativa local en Paraguay" (Challenges and progress in the implementation of local participatory governance mechanisms in Paraguay) explores the challenges and progress made in the implementation of institutional mechanisms for local participatory governance in Paraguay and their potential contributions to sustainable development, through an integrated review of scientific literature and legislation on the institutionalization of participatory governance mechanisms

at the local level. The authors emphasize that, although Paraguay has specific laws and regulatory standards for these mechanisms, the degree of participation allowed by them does not guarantee the full participation and empowerment of local communities in the management of sustainable development in their territories.

The next papers address about “La importancia del reconocimiento de las lenguas de señas para la garantía plena de la democracia, libertad de expresión e inclusión de los sordos Latinoamericanos” (The importance of recognizing sign languages for the full guarantee of democracy, freedom of expression, and inclusion of Latin American deaf communities) authored by Amanda Avansini Arruda and Josiane Rose Petry Veronese. The text analyzes how the recognition of sign languages in the field of Constitutional Law can be an important path for the consolidation of democracy and freedom of expression for the deaf. In this sense, the result achieved by the authors is clear: the dissemination of sign language communication is a decisive factor in ensuring the full enjoyment of fundamental, civil, and democratic rights by the deaf.

Beatriz Campuzano Díaz’s paper, titled “Los Derechos Humanos y el reconocimiento de situaciones jurídicas vinculadas al estatuto personal” (Human Rights and the recognition of legal situations related to personal status), aims to analyze the method of recognizing legal situations in relation to personal status issues and the influence of the case law of the ECtHR and the CJEU on the human rights recognized in the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The author concludes that the case law analyzed demonstrates how human rights law is a decisive factor in the recognition of legal situations in an area where there is a lack of uniform international rules due to the difficulties in reaching an agreement.

Lucas Bruno Amaral Mendes’s article titled “A dialética do ocidente geográfico e cultural: entre a herança europeia, a norma e a realidade” (The dialectic of the geographical and cultural west: between european heritage, norm, and reality) focuses on discussing the culture and history of the West in its cultural

configuration, through the continental values of Freedom, Equality, and Fraternity, and the Anglo-Saxon values of Freedom, Prosperity, and Property. The article considers the peculiarities of European, Latin-Western, and Anglo-Saxon history and culture, including the manifestation of their wills in the objective world, as mentioned by the philosopher Hegel. Subsequently, the Author seeks to reflect on the current difficulty of the West in transposing its political will into reality, as well as the geopolitical and ideological conflicts that contribute to this situation. Finally, the article draws on interconnected debates from various research, documents, and speeches to provide a transdisciplinary reflection, considering studies in history, culture, politics, law, and international relations.

The penultimate article, written by Daniel Romera Mejías and titled “La *Global Gateway* de la Unión Europea en el marco de las relaciones sino-europeas” (The European Union’s *Global Gateway* in the framework of sino-european relations), analyzes how the Global Gateway not only represents an economic and geopolitical response to the Chinese initiative but also how it embodies the promotion of EU values and democracy at the global level. In the conclusion, the author explores the implications of the Global Gateway within the current international system, observing how it may collide with the aforementioned Chinese project. Particular attention is paid to how this instrument influences global competition for leadership in infrastructure and connectivity, and how it can serve as a vehicle for the globalization of European values, promoting democracy and respect for human rights in the beneficiary regions.

The final article, authored by Stephanie Cristina de Sousa Vieira, is titled “Due diligence as an instrument to enforce environmental protection: analysis of the regulatory proposal in European law.” It examines the limitations and potential of due diligence in advancing environmental protection within the EU. The study highlights the spread of due diligence, its justification for regional regulation, and challenges under the proposed EU directive. The author concludes that, despite

needing complementary mechanisms and improvements, due diligence is a vital tool for effective environmental protection in the current climate context.

This edition also features an interview with Diego Moreno, Judge-elect of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, titled "La Corte Interamericana de DD.HH. ha hecho mucho por la institucionalidad democrática en la región". Conducted on October 15, 2024, during the VIII Jean Monnet Network BRIDGE Seminar at the National University of Asunción, Paraguay, the interview was led by José María Costa, a Paraguayan journalist, lawyer, and political scientist.

As the editors of this issue, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the authors and contributors whose efforts made the publication of the seventh edition of the *Latin American Journal of European Studies* possible. We hope this edition provides valuable insights and fosters meaningful dialogue and collaboration between the European Union and Latin America.

Aline Beltrame de Moura & Naiara Posenato