

Corruption and control in the European Union

The European Union (EU) is in turmoil due to reasons that include the economic disasters of Greece, Portugal and Spain, security reasons, e.g. terrorist attacks in France, the refugee crisis, and the exit of Britain from the EU, to mention a few.

The history of the European Union is characterised by hundreds of years of wars between countries, including civil wars. The EU is an example of a supra regional governance institution where countries cooperate based on security and economic reasons.

However, the EU is not without corruption. For the past 19 years, auditors have refused to sign off the accounts as accurate. For example, in 2013, the auditors reported that €6 billion had been spent "in error" – up 23% on the year before (Dixon).

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Farming subsidies account for 40% of the EU budget (Dixon). These subsidies make it extremely challenging for other countries to compete with EU products, because the playing field is one of unfair trade. These subsidies and the notion of non-discrimination based on free and fair trade and reciprocity as the principles propagated by the World Trade Organisation, is a contradiction. It is clear from Dixon's work that the EU Commission pay perks and other pri-



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ileges that are so generous, and employment prospects so poor if someone leaves the Commission, that few can consider leaving.

In general, when an executive is afraid to walk out over a matter of principle, he or she has already compromised his or her position. Closing ranks seems to be a common feature when incidents of corruption are detected and not addressed.

It is highly likely that corruption in the EU will continue to feature on a daily basis and in every agency that is a subsidiary to it (Dixon). As a supra national regional institution with a large bureaucracy and a 27 government membership the EU is not an appropriate example of how to prevent corruption and it will remain with governance challenges for years to come.

References

Dixon, P. 2015. The Future of Almost Everything.

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