

CITIZENS' REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FUTURE CHALLENGES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract: *The present paper focuses on an important aspect of the European Union's becoming in this century, that of the multi – level governance, as it is outlined by the Treaty of Lisbon. The hypothesis used in approaching the subject is that: while the European governance, defined as a multi – level governance because of the many actors involved in the European decision – making process, is facing challenges with regard to its democratic legitimacy, the national government is facing the challenges brought by Europeanization to the Member States – from the point of view of the support, participation in and influencing of the European decision – making process. Therefore, the paper focuses on three aspects: the theoretical framework of citizens' representation and participation in the context of the EU's multi - level governance; the outlining of the mechanisms and challenges of the interaction between the political representatives and the governed, from a theoretical point of view and as it is reflected in the Eurobarometers; and last, but not least, the analysis of the above mentioned relation as applied to first and second years Political Science students from the University of Oradea, as an early barometer of the challenges that their perspectives on this relation generate not only for the academic institutions but also for the labour market – and, particularly, the political representatives, as potential employers, because of the role that they will play in the development of our democratic societies and multi – level Europe, as Political Science graduates*

Keywords: *European Union, multi - level governance, citizenship, participation, representation, democratic deficit, Political Science students*