

EUROPEAN STUDIES AT THE FACULTY OF ARTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA, PAST AND PRESENT

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Abstract. *Analyze, interpret and think Europe, based on studies guided by a multifocal pluridisciplinarity has the line master foster learning and critical thinking in order to make the diagnosis of structures and geographic representations, historical, political, social, economic, cultural, religious, but also the attitudes and aspirations, bearing in mind the otherness in all its dimensions. It was in the pursuit of this goal that in Portugal courses in European Studies have been created. In several areas have also been offered oriented courses for the training of economists, lawyers, teachers, politicians, political scientists, historians of European Studies. Framed within various universities, institutes and higher schools, research centers, foundations, European Studies also mobilize humanistic knowledge. This happened at the University of Coimbra.*

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Europe is and has always been plural. This is the matrix and multiplicity that must be considered when questioning, discussing and reflecting on history, geography, economics, law, politics, religion, culture, citizenship and identity issues. In other words, thinking in terms of *unity* and *diversity*.

While economic and political means and ends have been put at the forefront and social and cultural issues have been pushed to the sidelines, the truth is that they are central. It has become a matter of urgency to bring the issues that concern citizens into the field of university research. Hence the perceived need to analyse, reflect on and interpret Europe through multifocal and multidisciplinary studies in order to promote learning and critical reflection, with a view to diagnosing geographical, historical, political, social, economic, cultural and religious structures and representations, mentalities, and aspirations.

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To this end, lecturers with different scientific backgrounds and enriched by different experiences, recognised in teaching and research, have been invited to reflect on and pass on to students, who also come from different backgrounds, the knowledge and projects from different fields that would allow them to explore and understand the paths that have shaped, divided or interwoven the space that is Europe.

European Studies has always required, and will continue to require, a theoretical and practical approach of a multi- and interdisciplinary nature. This is the only way to approach and analyse the complex problems involved. The aim is to combine more general training with more specialised training, always with a multifocal objective achieved through multidisciplinary mainstreaming, in order to acquire a solid competence in the specific field of European Studies, but also to develop the ability to think globally about problems and to exercise intellectual autonomy and critical thinking. All of this was and still is valuable capital for guiding future graduates, master's and doctoral students in an increasingly complex and evolving world and labour market. It was therefore appropriate to also mobilise the knowledge of the humanities in the training plan, prioritising a reflective and self-reflexive dimension.

The very consolidation of the European integration process has led to a growing demand for European Studies courses, some of which operate beyond the national framework, even within the European institutions, but also in the country itself, in universities, schools, companies, local authorities, public administration, various civil society organisations, etc.

The delay in Portugal's accession to the European Community was inevitably reflected in the delay in the establishment of the European Studies research area.

Portugal's accession to the EU in 1986 was a turning point. From then on, there was a need for knowledge about the accession, the negotiation process and the process of European construction, and the university began to produce it.

Courses in European Studies thus became necessary and inevitable. As might be expected, they began in the technical fields, with the first European Studies courses in Law and Economics, in the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economics. This was the scenario in Portugal in the 1980s. The 1990s saw a growth in both research and teaching, especially at postgraduate level, in the historiography of European integration. An identical and almost simultaneous trend was observed in the fields of political science and international relations. This warrants some explanation.

There are underlying theoretical and political reasons for this: as regards the former, it is due to the inescapable place of European Studies in the international scientific scene, and the political reasons is that Portugal, as a member of the EEC and later of the European Union, faced with European challenges, had not only to master this knowledge, but also to produce knowledge in the field of European Studies. And it is up to the university, I repeat, to play this role of knowledge production and training.

The field of European Studies has thus been consolidated through curricular units in the curricula of Law, Economics, History, Political Science and International Relations.

It even became an independent specialisation in several universities, especially in the first and second study cycles of study.

In terms of the first cycle, examples include the degree in European Studies at the Faculties of Arts of Lisbon, Porto, Coimbra, Open University, Lusíada University, the degree in European Studies and International Politics at the University of the

Azores and the degree in European Studies and International Relations at Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias.

It should be added that at first cycle level, i.e. the undergraduate level, all universities offering degrees in Law, Economics, Political Science and International Relations offer European Studies courses, as does the second cycle.

At the second cycle level, i.e. the Master's level, European Studies are an autonomous structure in various universities with a dominant focus on law, economics, history or political science, and international relations. It should be noted that the first Master's degree in European Studies in Portugal was introduced at the University of Minho. As for the third cycle, i.e. the doctorate, the Catholic University, through the Institute of European Studies, awarded the doctorate, but other universities had made provision for the third cycle, especially since the Bologna process came into force.

Indeed, European Studies courses, while not confined to a single disciplinary field, have not ignored the contribution of other fields of knowledge – law, economics, political science, sociology, international relations, history, philosophy, geography. However, they should also be grounded in the humanities. They would thus benefit from the body of knowledge taught in faculties of arts and social and human sciences.

This was not a simple extension or reformulation of other courses – languages, history or philosophy – but, because of its transversal nature, the opening up of an entirely new area of teaching and research to help strengthen the capacity to respond to the demands of society.

The aim was to understand the European reality through the diversity of knowledge and, above all, to think about Europe both objectively and subjectively: to understand Europe in a comprehensive and critical way, but also to make new contributions to the *construction of Europe*.

As a result, both in Portugal and in Europe, degrees in European Studies are relatively new and still few in number. The field of European Studies has become autonomous, focusing in particular on the problem of European construction, both from the perspective of how it fits into the international organisation of Europe and the world, and the study of European integration in its many aspects: literary, geographical, economic, political, legal, cultural, religious, etc. This was the case at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon in 1998 and at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Coimbra in 2002. In this case, the degree in European Studies, was part of the Department of History, which was later renamed Department of History, European Studies, Archaeology and Arts.

In some cases, European Studies appeared in the form of specialisation and postgraduate Masters courses. Examples include the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Siena, the Université catholique de Louvain, Robert Schuman Université de Strasbourg, Nancy, and the Centre d'Études Européennes de Sciences PO (Paris), inter alia. At the University of Coimbra, the postgraduate programme in European Studies was created in the Faculty of Law in 1983 and in the Faculty of Economics in 2007.

As I mentioned earlier, there had been a trend towards autonomisation. Thus, within the organic framework of the Faculty of Arts, European Studies degrees were created, with a strongly dominant humanistic slant.

In the case of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Coimbra, it is important to highlight the originality of the European Studies degree, which was created in 2002.

Multidisciplinary knowledge was pooled together, with an emphasis on history, philosophy, geography, journalism and modern languages, as well as contributions from other fields traditionally outside the programme: law, economics, political science, international relations, sociology, among others.

A comparative analysis between the FLUC programme and that of the Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III, reveals an identical purpose – to teach the diversity of multidisciplinary contributions. I experienced this in 1993 when I was part of an Erasmus group that included the universities of Coimbra, Salamanca, Granada, Poitiers and Siena. These contacts were productive in the immediate future. Under the auspices of the University of Siena and coordinated by Professor Ariane Landuyt, a Master in European Studies – postgraduate course – was set up.

Although I have taken other courses at various European universities, my experience at the universities involved in the Master in European Studies since 1999 has been remarkable. In addition to Coimbra, Salamanca, Poitiers, Granada, Strasbourg 3, Krakow, Oradea, Montpellier 1, Swansea, Hanover, Athens, Bologna, Siegen, and the Azores, other European universities have joined this Master's programme, which ran from 2001 to 2013.

Other initiatives are of note.

At FLUC, a Master's programme was set up on Europe – Visions of the Other, which I coordinated between 2002 and 2007, and in 2006 another Master's programme was set up, also at FLUC, on European Studies, coordinated by Professor Doutor António Martins da Silva. FLUC also ran a PhD programme in European Studies from 2009 to 2012.

This teaching and research experience at FLUC drew heavily on the experience and multiple activities – courses, debates, seminars of the Postgraduate programme in European Studies at the FDUC, which, as I mentioned, began in 1983 under the wise coordination and experience of Professor Doutor Manuel Lopes Porto. The FEUC Masters in International Relations with specialisation in European Studies, approved in 2007, was just as important, thanks to the tireless efforts of Professor Rogério Leitão.

It is also important to highlight the importance of European Studies in the projects of the Research Centres of the Faculty of Law, the UC Centre for Social Studies (CES), the UC Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies (CEIS20) and the diverse academic production of journals published in Coimbra, such as *Temas de Integração*, founded in 1996, and *Debater a Europa*, founded in 2009. There have been many scientific meetings – colloquia, seminars, workshops, courses in universities, but also in primary and secondary schools. We are indebted to Professors Manuel Lopes Porto and Rogério Leitão for their teaching and to several generations for the many and varied initiatives that have been the result of a healthy and always fruitful collaboration. Our Faculties of Law, Economics, and Arts owe them much. We should also highlight the dedicated collaboration of Professor António Martins da Silva and so many other promising FLUC professors who have been instrumental in giving a new impetus to teaching and research in European Studies.

The Europe in which our students will be part of in the future will be very different from the one we are teaching them today. At the beginning of the 21st century, as now, rapid change and growing uncertainty meant that we had to think and analyse more than just find “good” answers.

A solid interaction between the different fields of the humanities was and is necessary. An intensive dialogue between different fields of knowledge was and is desirable: Law, Economics, but also Political Science, Sociology, International Relations, History, Philosophy, Geography, Anthropology, and Languages. A dialogue within the Social Sciences and Humanities was and is essential.

Therefore, in addition to the Bachelor's degree (1st cycle), and to the Master's degree (2nd cycle), it is necessary and desirable to have a doctoral degree within the framework of European Studies at FLUC. This is the framework in which teachers guide young students in projects that will enable them to obtain grants, apply for international projects, supplement their studies with in-depth research leading to a doctoral dissertation, a future publication in a book, or articles published in specialist journals in Portugal and abroad. They can also benefit from their work as collaborating researchers in research centres in Coimbra, such as the Faculty of Law, the CES and the CEIS20.

For this doctoral programme to exist and function properly, it is necessary to have teachers trained in European Studies.

To this end, there must be competitions and vacant posts to train these future teachers and researchers. It would be useful to establish partnerships with Political Science and International relations. This is an objective or a desire that I would like to see materialised.

Nevertheless, much has been done in recent years...

A final word to the lecturers of European Studies at FLUC. Their work in the restructuring of the 1st cycle course and the Masters course has been tremendous.

It is time to celebrate 40 years of European Studies at the FDUC, 21 years at the FLUC, hoping that they will continue to be revitalised in the future so that we can *think better about Europe, to make Europe better*. Much of this has to do with the coordination of young and promising coordinators, directors, researchers and teachers of European Studies. Their success and achievements are and will also be those of the students, of the teachers of European Studies, and of the University of Coimbra.

