

Preface

I am finishing drafting this short introduction on the 23th of June. It is an extremely rainy day all over the United Kingdom and is the day of the «Brexit» referendum. What a day to comment on some extremely insightful, in depth, engaging analysis of the good things and also the bad things that the European Union is about. And still, I feel that the Editors should be commended for their choice to devote the whole issue of the *Bocconi Legal Papers* to European Law.

In times of crisis, and these are truly bad times, it takes some courage to keep on making the argument for a transnational and complex legal system like the European Union. Initially gathered in a simpler economic «community», the European countries have then gradually integrated into an actual «union» whose objectives and aims go further than the mere facilitation of commercial and business activities. The law of the European Community, first, and the law of the European Union, subsequently, have thus grown at an incredible pace over recent years and now span the most diverse economic and social fields. Nevertheless, such development of the European legal order has not occurred without difficulties and contrasts. In particular, the events that have marked the history of the last decade, both at the international stage and at the regional level, have certainly sharpened the complexities that challenge the progress of the European integration. Financial crises, immigration flows, environmental degradation, energy needs, market competition, international conflicts, terrorism: hints of some of the factors that have recently risked jeopardizing the stability and effectiveness of the Union. The consequent threats to the structural basis of the European Union find expression in both the challenging task faced by the European institutions to intervene in the most problematic sectors in order to provide for constructive responses, and the contrasting voices raising in each Member State of the Union and narrowly focused on national instances.

In such a complex context, the aim of the *Bocconi Legal Papers* is not, of course, that of providing an answer that fits it all. The contributions included in the present

Volume are instead devoted to some specific topics ranging from Energy, Taxation, Finance, Corporate Governance, and Competition. Despite their variety, there is a thread going through all of papers as they are all about «EU at its best», that is to say specific even practical regulatory approach (or in some of the cases the lack of) rather than grand and sometimes illusory constitutional designs. After all – and I really feel today is the right day to quote it, in the Schumann Declaration it says that *«Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.»*

And by the way, it still rains.

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