

Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the assumptions of a Jean Monnet Network's international research project, *MoreEU More Europe to Overcome the Crisis*, conducted at the Institute of European Studies at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw between 2014 and 2017. The article discusses the social requirements for the project, its objectives, structure, research assumptions and implementation process.

Keywords: *crisis in the European Union, research project, Jean Monnet Network*

Projekt MoreEU i jego realizacja w Polsce

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem artykułu jest prezentacja założeń międzynarodowego projektu badawczego Jean Monnet Network – *MoreEU More Europe to overcome the crisis (Więcej Europy dla przezwyciężenia kryzysu)* realizowanego w Instytucie Europeistyki na Wydziale Nauk Politycznych i Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w latach 2014–2017. W artykule omówione są społeczne przesłanki dla podjęcia projektu, jego cele, struktura, założenia badawcze i proces realizacji.

Słowa kluczowe: *kryzys w Unii Europejskiej, projekt badawczy, sieć Jean Monnet*

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MoreEU project and its implementation in Poland¹

The aim of this article is to present the assumptions of Jean Monnet Network's international research project, *MoreEU More Europe to Overcome the Crisis*, conducted at the Institute of European Studies at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw in 2014–2017. The article will discuss the social requirements for the project, its objectives, structure, research assumptions and implementation process.

Social context and project goals

The project More Europe to Overcome the Crisis was born as the response of the academic world to the systematically growing Eurosceptic sentiment in the EU Member States, which has been the aftermath of the EU crisis since 2008. The year 2008 will be an important milestone in the development of the EU. It opens the period of the EU's multi-faceted crisis, which has gone through many stages within nine years from the first turbulence in the economic sphere and now appears not only as the Eurozone crisis but as a holistic crisis of the European integration (Fiszer 2015, p. 83).

The crisis in the EU has affected primarily the economy of the Member States. In 2008–2009 it took over the financial markets and the banking sector. At the turn of the consecutive years (2009–2010) it triggered a deep economic recession. The response of the EU Member States was initially of neo-Keynesian character. In the early years of

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the crisis, the richest countries launched a number of business packages and massively assisted banks on the verge of bankruptcy. These actions did not remain without side effects – they deepened the budget crisis. Hence, another phase of the recession dominated by austerity policies – austerity structural reform programs implemented mainly in Southern European countries. Then, in the years 2010–2012, the crisis entered into the phase of serious social problems (a sharp rise in unemployment and poverty). It coincided with the sharpest phase of the institutional paralysis of the euro area (2011–2012). After 2012 the crisis has entered a political phase, which has been reflected in the rise of social discontent towards the ruling elites (national level) and the decline in support for the integration project (supra-national level, see Brexit) (Książopolski et al. 2009; Nadolska, Szewior 2016: p. 133).

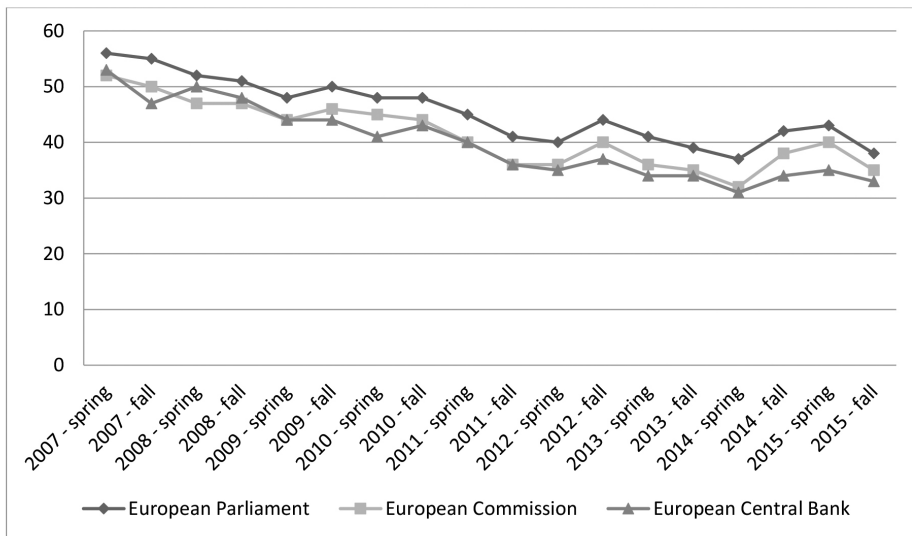
In parallel to the ongoing economic recession in the EU, its immediate external environment has also lost its political and economic stability. 2010 is the beginning of the so-called Arab Spring – social protest of frustrated young people in North Africa and the Middle East (Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Jordan, Mauritania, Oman, Sudan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Morocco, Djibouti, Iraq, Somalia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Western Sahara) against inefficient economic management. They protested against poverty, unemployment, corruption and non-respect for civic rights (free elections, censorship and abolition of restrictions on civil liberties). In the most extreme cases protests have developed in the coup and revolution (Egypt) or open armed conflict between the regime and the opposition (Libya, Syria, Iraq) (Dzisia-Szuszczkiewicz 2011).

As a result, for the first time in its history, the EU has been in the immediate vicinity of the fallen states or countries entangled in a long-standing internal armed conflict (Emperor 2016: p. 102). This has become a source of further problems, that is, the wave of refugees from this region since 2010 (first Libya, then Syria). The year 2014 brought another challenge, which Europe's weakened economy had to face – the outbreak of conflict in eastern Ukraine. In turn, the year 2015 was marked by the migration crisis and the involvement of in the civil war in Syria. The conflict in Ukraine has once again exposed the EU's impossibility to lead a coherent foreign and security policy (in this conflict the Russian president adopted a strategy of playing their own interests between EU states and ignoring EU diplomacy) (Fiszer 2015: p. 86) whereas the migration crisis dismantled the pillars of EU visa and asylum policy. The latter has significantly influenced the decision of the British people to leave the European Union which they took up in the referendum in 2016. Brexit has become the nucleus of the process of European disintegration.

It is therefore appropriate to state that the economic crisis has acted like litmus paper. It highlighted the multi-faceted dysfunctions of the European Union. Limits and contradictions of the EU, masked during the economic and political stability, including in particular: increasing objectification of the EU in international relations, problems with the legitimacy of the integration project, structural crisis, modernisation crisis, crisis of values, social crisis, democratic deficit, problems with the construction of multicultural society at the level of the Member States, etc., during the crisis of the euro area, manifested themselves in a multiplexed manner (Wojtaszczyk et al. 2014; Wielgosz 2013: p. 9).

Researchers point out that “EU crises inhibit integration processes in Europe and promote the rise of anti-EU attitudes” (Fiszler 2015: p. 87). This is confirmed by the Eurobarometer survey. The consecutive crises have been reflected in the falling level of acceptance for the European unification project after 2008. According to the presented data, the level of trust to the European Parliament dropped by 18 percentage points (from 56% to 38%) between 2007–2015, to the Commission – 17 percentage points (from 52% to 35%), the Central Bank by 20 percentage points (from 53% to 33%).

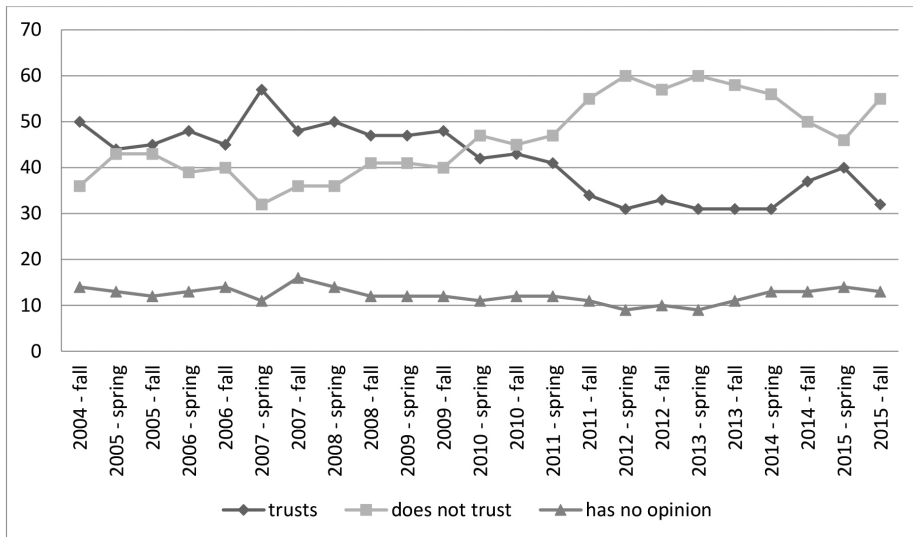
Figure 1. Europeans trust in EU institutions in 2007–2015



Source: Standard Eurobarometr 84, Autumn 2015, Report. Public opinion in the European Union: p. 104.

Also the trust in the European Union as a whole has fallen from 57% in 2007 to 32% in 2015. The percentage of people who do not trust the EU has increased from 32% in 2007 to 55% in 2015. The part of people who did not have a say in the analysed period was stable and maintained at about 10%.

Figure 2. Europeans trust in EU in 2004–2015

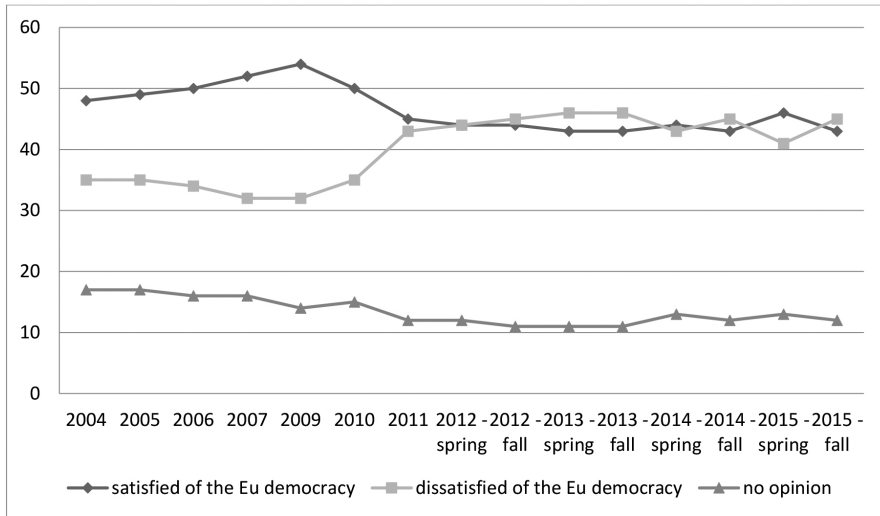


Source: Standard Eurobarometr 84, Autumn 2015, Report. Public opinion in the European Union: p. 109.

Experts on European integration emphasise that “deep in crises, tired and at the crossroads, the European Union needs (...) a new axiology, solidarity and refreshing forgotten words, concepts and emotions that in the past have motivated the effort to build a safe, united, democratic and rich Europe” (Fischer 2015: p. 88).

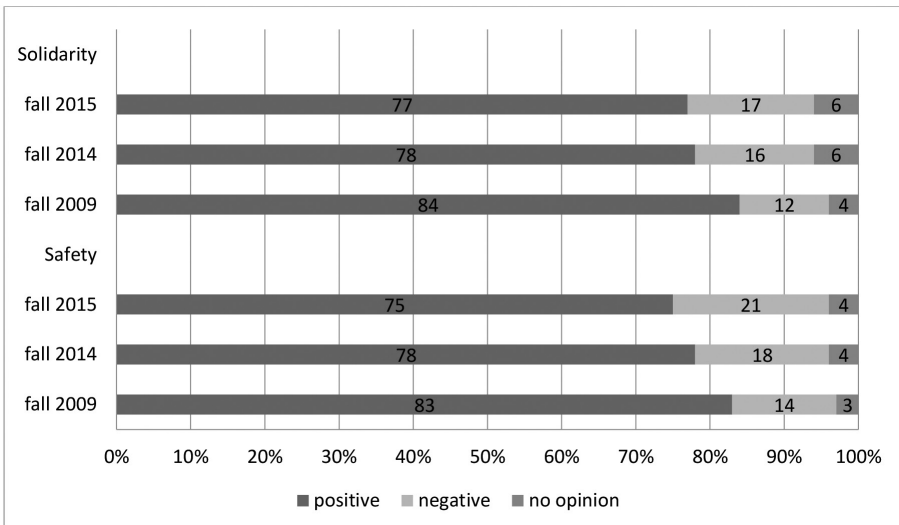
As Europeans are less and less satisfied with the functioning of democracy in the EU, the feeling of solidarity and security among Europeans after 2009 weakened on average by 7–8 percentage points. European citizens are also less optimistic about the future of the EU (see Figures 3, 4 and 5).

Figure 3. Europeans’ views on the functioning of democracy in the EU 2004–2015

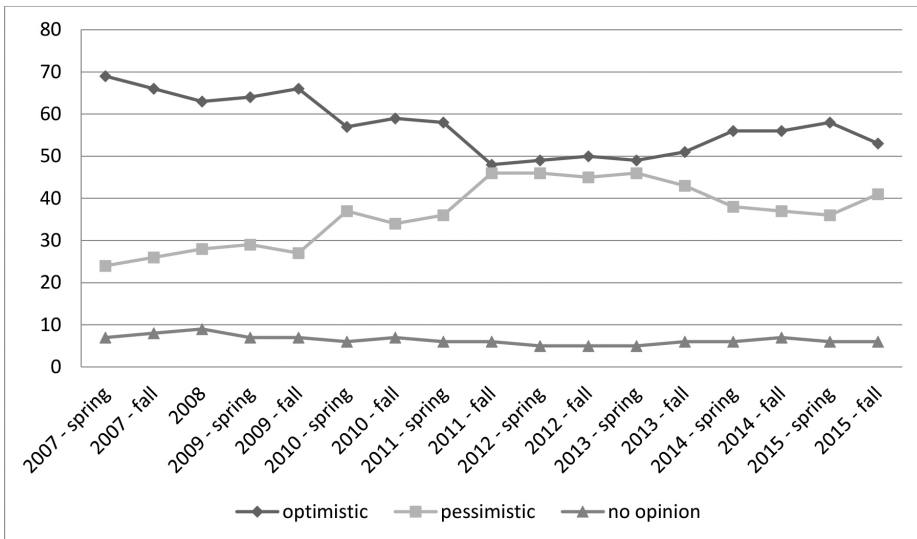


Source: Standard Eurobarometr 84, Autumn 2015, Report. Public opinion in the European Union: p. 133.

Figure 4. The attitude of the Europeans to values such as security and solidarity



Source: Standard Eurobarometr 84, Autumn 2015, Report. Public opinion in the European Union: p. 154.

Figure 5. The attitude of the Europeans to the future of the European Union

Source: Standard Eurobarometr 84, Autumn 2015, Report. Public opinion in the European Union: p. 165.

In these circumstances, it is important for the European Union to start a “debate on its ideology and fundamental values. About what the European identity, responsibility and solidarity are today is and what they should be. What obligations it places on the richer and which ones on the poorer members of the EU family. Without renaming, reminding or rediscovering this European identity, the Union will not be able to function normally, effectively solve its economic, social and political problems, expand, develop and modernise, and this will lead to an even greater crisis, or break up” (Fischer 2015: p. 88).

The MoreEU project fully addresses this need. The aim of the project is to undertake a wide-ranging social debate about the state of the European integration process, the weaknesses and strengths of the adopted integration model, to diagnose problems that threaten the continuation of integration, to formulate recommendations for corrective action and indicate the desired model for the final European integration process.

The target audience of the project consists of:

- representatives of the academic world,
- non-governmental organisations: civil society organisations, ie. associations, foundations, think tanks in European affairs,
- representatives of public institutions,

- journalists,
- high school and university students.

Structure of the project

The project is scheduled for three years – 2014–2017 – and implemented under Jean Monnet Network by a consortium of 5 universities:

- Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna in Pisa (Italy) – consortium leader, co-ordinator prof. Roberto Castaldi
- Notre Europe-Institute Jacques Delors from Paris (France) – coordinator, director Yves Bertoncini
- CEU San Pablo University of Madrid (Spain) – coordinator, prof. José Maria Beneyto
- University of Warsaw (Poland) – coordinator, prof. Konstanty A. Wojtaszczyk
- Nova Law School in Lisbon (Portugal) – coordinator, prof. Nuno Piçarra

The three activities envisaged within the project are three-dimensional: scientific, educational and artistic as well as deliberative.

The scientific dimension of the project is manifested in the implementation of five international conferences (one by each project partner) aimed at finding answers to the guiding question of the project “What Europe is needed? And how to talk about it in the age of widespread Euroscepticism?”. The topics of the various conferences have been selected in such a way to expose the most disturbing phenomena that the EU has had to face after 2008, namely the crisis of solidarity, the budget crisis, the crisis of legitimacy, multi-speed Europe, the democratic deficit.

Topics of scientific conferences:

1. “What kind and form of European solidarity to overcome the crisis?, Madrid, 11–12 June 2015
2. “What budget, resources, fiscal and borrowing powers for the EU?”, Florence, 12–13 November 2015
3. “EU Legitimacy in Time of Crisis: How to Overcome the Legitimacy and Democracy Deficit of the EU?”, Warsaw, 20–21 June 2016
4. “What forms of differentiated integration? How to federalise the Eurozone while keeping the Single Market and the EU?”, Lisboa, 22–23 May 2017
5. “What form of democratic government for the EU? What kind of democracy is best suited for the EU?”, Paris, 26 June 2017

The key element of the project is the so-called European Awareness Day, which implements the educational and artistic as well as deliberative component of the MoreEU project.

As part of the educational and artistic component, the project partners present the musical “Europe: What a passion! a Story of a Storm of Love”, which tells the story of European integration prepared by a team of Italian artists from *Centro studi, formazione, comunicazione e progettazione sull’Unione Europea e la global governance* (CesUE) combined with the debate of the youth. The audience for the musical and the participants of the debate consists of high school and university students (at least 500 participants aged 16–22). This unconventional form of communication and learning about the European Union is aimed at stimulating youth to deepen their reflection and debate on the problems of the EU. Within this component, seminars are also organised for teachers about the knowledge about the contemporary world.

The deliberative component assumes that each of the project partners organises the deliberative workshops for representatives of NGOs devoted to key integration challenges (at least 50 participants representing about 15 different institutions) and a three-hour seminar with government and media representatives devoted to analysis of instruments of the information policy of the EU and the Member States on communication about the united Europe and its processes.

Implementation of MoreEU in Poland

In Poland, the project is being implemented by the Institute of European Studies at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Warsaw. The project manager in Poland is Prof. Konstanty Adam Wojtaszczyk, Director of the Institute of European Studies, while co-ordinators are Dr Łukasz Zamecki, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Warsaw for Science and Foreign Cooperation, and Dr Jadwiga Nadolska, Deputy Director of the Institute of European Studies for Research and International Cooperation.

As the subject of the organised scientific conference, the team in Poland took up the question of the legitimacy of the project of European integration. The sources, scope and mechanisms of the legitimisation and democratic deficit of the EU, forms of political legitimisation in the EU, activities strengthening the legitimisation of the EU and European integration, the impact of intra-EU movement on the legitimacy of the EU, the impact of intra-EU crises on the legitimacy of the EU, the use of referendums in the

Euro-sceptic and centrifugal movements in the EU, the prospects for the development of a disintegrating scenario in the EU were diagnosed (Lewandowski, Biskup 2017).

Organised on September 23, 2016 at the University of Warsaw, the European Awareness Day had a three-pronged structure. The event covered: musical and debate of youth, deliberative workshops and a focus study on the diagnosis of good practice in EU communication.

The task of the musical and the debate was to reach out through the original form of narration of the issues of European integration to the widest possible audience. The musical “Europe: What a passion! a Story of a Storm of Love” was watched by over 500 students from 12 high schools from 6 Polish cities: Warsaw, Łowicz, Otwock, Minsk Mazowiecki, Siedlce and Kielce. The musical, in addition to its artistic values, pursued educational goals – it was an introduction to the debate with young people about the future of the project of European integration. It consisted of 12 European well-known works that were arranged to tell dynamically the story of the last 70 years of European integration. Two songs – „Dni których nie znamy” of Marek Grechuta and „Dmuchawce, latawce, wiatr” of Urszula – were presented in Polish, the remaining ones in other European languages. Songs were supplemented with graphical presentations.

The discussion concerned both the history of European integration presented in the musical and the current challenges of the European Union (Brexit, populism, financial crisis) which will shape the future of integration. The points of the debate were presented in the form of following slogans:

- Europe as a story,
- the promised and unfulfilled promises of Europe,
- is the story of the united Europe also our story?
- is it possible to quit the story, as the Brits did?

The debate allowed the pupils to articulate their needs for the continuation of the project of European integration and to confront the various visions of the future of the EU. During the debate, Eurosupporters and Euro-sceptics clashed.

Deliberative Workshop was another activity realised within the framework of the European Awareness Day. The deliberative workshop was attended by academics, thinkers, representatives of civil society organisations and PhD students in European affairs representing more than fifteen institutions (Warsaw School of Economics, Institute of European Studies of the University of Warsaw, Polish Information Society, Information Office of the European Parliament in Poland, Polish Association of European Studies, Embassy of the Republic of Latvia, Centre for Europe of the University of

Warsaw, EurActiv.pl, InfoPointUE, Faculty of Law and Administration of University of Warsaw, Institute of Political Science UKSW, BETA Polska Association, Association of Family Life Academy “Akademia Życia Rodzinne”, Civic Institute, Europe Direct Information Center, Institute of Economic and Social Studies in Warsaw, European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht).

Deliberation fulfils important functions in the democratic society – education, consultation and decision making. It is a communication process in the form of public discussion that serves to exchange ideas and shape the attitudes of the participants in the debate (educational goals), to find arguments for the presented scenarios for solving major social issues (consultation goals), to work out specific solutions to be implemented on the local, regional or national levels (decision-making goals) (Witkowska 2017).

The discussion was organised under the motto: “More Europe to overcome the crisis”. During the discussion the following topics were discussed:

- what is the meaning of “More Europe” today?
- where is the crisis in the process of integration and its surroundings?
- are Eurosceptics right to call the EU to give back competence to the Member States?
- is the EU a platform of competition between “small” and “big” states or rather a formula that fosters compromise between states?

A focused, deepened interview conducted on September 24, 2016 was another activity of the project. Sampling was purposeful. Participants of the study were journalists, representatives of NGOs and public administration (Europe Direct, Polish Radio – Information Press Agency, Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Institute of European Studies, University of Warsaw, Polish Institute for European Studies, Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Institute for International Studies, European Fund and Development Policy Department, Insight Policy, Europass National Center for the Promotion of Results and Tools to Support the Eurooass National Center, EurActiv).

The purpose of the interview was to diagnose good practice in communicating European integration and learning about Europe. Focus participants discussed both the constraints, opportunities and learning and information about Europe and the EU. The first point of discussion concerned the challenges that arise in communicating and learning about the EU or Europe. Another – the rules governing institutions for communication and learning about the EU and Europe. The heterogeneous receiver of the message as a determining factor in the message about the EU was an important issue

raised in the discussion. A key part of the study concerned good practices in information and education about the European Union. Participants in the focus presented innovative activities in the field of communication and learning about the EU, carried out by the institutions they represented. They pointed to such activities as: teaching in schools adapted to the needs of children (Europe Direct); radio programs broadcast in all Polish radio programs, financed by EU funds and informed about current events in the EU – project Euranet Plus (Polish Radio Information Agency); information projects for adolescents and children: European Voluntary Service, eTwinning – a free platform for teachers to contact teachers and children from different Member States (Foundation for the Development of the Education System, Europass Center); organisation of seminars, symposiums and conferences on European subjects, summer schools addressed to students from Ukraine, Belarus, numerous publications on various aspects of European integration (Institute of European Studies, WNPiSM UW); organisation of seminars, meetings on current issues related to the process of European integration (Polish Institute of International Affairs); information and promotion of European issues through the participation of analysts in meetings organised by various institutions (universities, media, non-governmental organisations) (Insight Policy); information actions on the Internet, running the EU portal (EurActiv); the best doctoral thesis on European subjects, numerous conferences and seminars on European subjects (Polish Society for European Studies) (Jas-Koziarkiewicz 2017).

The project also includes the organisation of teacher seminars that present experiences, best practices and materials related to European education. The first seminar was held on 30 September 2015 and was devoted to the issues of the European Employment Service (EURES), Europass, the European Job Mobility Portal. The next one scheduled for June 2017 will be devoted to the new social studies curriculum, particularly the program content and its realisation.

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