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INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

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Abstract: The energy crisis and the geopolitical tensions generated by the war in Ukraine continue to determine the European agenda during this year 2023. For Spain, the second semester of this year is especially relevant since it holds the Presidency of the Council of the Union and, therefore, of the European Union (EU). The Spanish Presidency coincides with the last stretch of the current institutional cycle, before the European elections in May 2024, after which not only the political composition of the European Parliament will be renewed, but also that of the European Commission. This circumstance confers on Spain a special responsibility to boost negotiations and achieve the necessary consensus in the EU's priority areas of work, such as the accelerated energy transition, digital transformation, the migration challenge, the social agenda and the stability at its eastern border. Likewise, the fifth Spanish presidency of the Council of the EU will coincide with a key moment in the implementation of the national recovery plans, since, by the end of 2023, the assigned European resources must be fully committed.

With these perspectives and in a still uncertain and changing geopolitical context, this miscellaneous number 69/2023 of *Deusto Journal of European Studies* includes various contributions that address issues related to the digitization of medicine, the future integration of Ukraine into the EU and the relations of the EU with Israel. This second issue of 2023 also includes the usual chronicles of jurisprudence and current affairs in Europe signed by our faithful and valued collaborators, David Ordóñez Solís and Beatriz Iñarritu.

Keywords: telemedicine, online brokering service, personal health data, integration, culture, Ukraine, Israel, European Neighbourhood Policy, Arab-Israeli conflict.

Juan Francisco Rodríguez Ayuso, Assistant Doctor Professor (accredited as Contracted Doctor Professor) of Administrative Law at UNED, provides a detailed analysis of the concept and legal nature of telemedicine as an online intermediation service. Under the title, "Technological disruption in the European healthcare: implications of public telemedicine for the protection of patient data", the author argues that the establishment of mobile applications

implemented by digital platforms enables the telematic provision of the patients' right to receive health care. In this context, Prof. Rodríguez Ayuso outlines the legal framework applicable to telemedicine services, distinguishing between the medical service provided and the channel through which it is provided. Drawing on this legislation, the author delves into the implications of the massive processing of sensitive information, such as that related to health, on the fundamental right of concerned parties to the protection of their personal data. In this sense, it concludes that consent is of the utmost importance as a mechanism to express the will of the interested party. Such a consent must be granted in compliance with the fundamental principles of European regulation on the processing of personal data, especially transparency and security.

José Luis Perales García, Degree in Law from the University of Barcelona and PhD student in Leisure, Culture and Communication for Human Development at the University of Deusto, analyses the possibilities of moving towards Ukraine's accession to the EU through cultural cooperation. With the title, "Road to Ukraine's integration into the EU: the European cultural policy", the author begins his analysis by highlighting how the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia began in 2014, as a result of the protests at Maidan Square in Kiev. The population protests led shortly thereafter to the conclusion of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. Within this framework of collaboration, Ukraine has been undertaking reforms in order to converge towards the political and economic model of the EU. Culture and its different manifestations have been one of the aspects of this growing dialogue. Following Russia's invasion of the country, the EU has granted Ukraine, as well as Moldova, the status of candidate State. The path of reforms will be long and, while waiting for the conflict to end first, the author argues that one way to speed up the process and bring Ukraine closer to the EU would be differentiated integration, that is, different paces of integration, according to the negotiation chapters, culture being one of the areas to prioritize.

Déborah Presta Novello, Margarita Salas Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Lleida, analyses the cooperation relations between the EU and the State of Israel within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean. Under the title, "Relations between the EU and Israel: time to rethink the EU's role in the Near East?", the author argues that EU-Israel relations have not untapped their full potential due to the EU's ambiguous position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This long regional antagonism has, in turn, been a permanent obstacle to promoting security and prosperity in the region through the ENP. After providing an overview of the various cooperation instruments and frameworks between the EU and Israel, the author argues that this State constitutes an indispensable ally in the region, just like the

Palestinian people and the Arab countries. The good relationship with all the parties involved gives the EU the opportunity to play a more prominent role as mediator in the conflict, promoting initiatives for rapprochement and peaceful coexistence, in line with the 2020 Abraham Accords sponsored by the US.

About the author

Beatriz Pérez de las Heras is Professor of European Union Law and Jean Monnet Chair on European Integration at the University of Deusto (UD). PhD in Law (UD), she accomplished post-graduate studies at the Centre Européen Universitaire de Nancy (France), where she obtained the DESS and DEA en Droit Communautaire. She was Director of the European Studies Institute at UD from 1996 to 2009, and Academic Coordinator of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on European Union Law and International Relations from 2013 to 2016. She also served as Vice-Dean for Research and International Relations at Deusto Faculty of Law from 2013 to 2015. She has been a visiting scholar at the Universities of Oregon (2009), Georgetown (2012), Fordham (2013), Boston College (2014) and Florida International University (2016). She is currently Editor —in— Chief of *Deusto Journal of European Studies* and Main Researcher of the “Integración Europea y Derecho Patrimonial” research team. She is author of various books and articles on European legal issues. As of September 2019, she is the Coordinator of the Jean Monnet Project “European Union-Asia Pacific Dialogue: promoting European Integration and mutual Knowledge across Continents” (EUNAP).