

# 26 - European Integration and the Churches

## from Culture and Religion

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 21 October 2023

By

[Sergei A. Mudrov](#)

Edited by

[Mathieu Segers](#) and

[Steven Van Hecke](#)

[Show author details](#)

---

## Summary

The principal theories of European integration (neo-functionalism, intergovernmentalism and social constructivism) have been rather silent about the presence and role of the religious factor in the process of unification of Europe. Such an approach, based on a certain underestimation of religion, seems to be unjustifiable nowadays, since it has become evident that the religious component of European integration appears in various forms and formats. For instance, some Protestants regard this integration as a religious ‘plot’, usually of the Roman Catholic Church, aiming at the construction of a new European Catholic empire and the undermining of Protestantism. Also, the religious dimension was one of the most controversial and fiercely debated issues at the time of drafting the European Constitution, namely the inclusion in the text of the reference to the Christian inheritance of Europe, or the reference to God. The religious or religion-related arguments played an important role in the debates on the EU membership of the largest ‘newcomer’ of the 2004 enlargement (Poland), and in the discussion in Ireland on the referendums on the Lisbon Treaty in 2008 and 2009. Finally, the importance of religion has been confirmed in the referendums on EU membership, including the 2016 ‘Brexit’ referendum in the United Kingdom.

It is therefore pertinent to claim that the presence of religion, or, to be more precise, Christian Churches, in the process of European integration is not disputable; we can only discuss how this presence has been seen, analysed and interpreted. This is addressed in chapter 26, in accordance with the following structure. First I discuss how the role of Churches in European integration has been described in the relevant literature. Then I analyse the role of Churches at the beginning of integration, in terms of their role as non-state actors and identity formers, as well as the Churches’ influence and their presence at supranational level. The final pages of this chapter have been devoted to the discussion of the practical cooperation of the Churches and EU institutions.

---

## Type

Chapter

## Information

The Cambridge History of the European Union, pp. 659 - 682

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108780865.027>

Publisher: Cambridge University Press

Print publication year: 2023

## Access options

Get access to the full version of this content by using one of the access options below. (Log in options will check for institutional or personal access. Content may require purchase if you do not have access.)

### Check access

#### Institutional login

We recognised you are associated with one or more institutions that don't have access to this content. If you should have access, please contact your librarian. [Access through your institution](#)

#### Personal login

Log in with your [Cambridge Core](#) account or [society details](#). Log in

### Book purchase

#### Digital access for individuals

**£120.00** Add to cart

---

## References

### Recommended Reading

Leustean, , L. N. (ed.). *Representing Religion in the European Union: Does God Matter?* (London and New York, NY, Routledge, 2012). [Google Scholar](#)

Mudrov, S. *Christian Churches in European Integration* (Abingdon and New York, NY, Routledge, 2016). [Google Scholar](#)

Mudrov, S. 'Did They Define the Outcome? Churches and the Independence Referendum in Scotland', *Journal of Religion in Europe* 11, no. 1 (2018), 20–45. [Google Scholar](#)

Nelsen, B. and Guth, J.. *Religion and the Struggle for European Union: Confessional Culture and the Limits of Integration* (Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 2015). [Google Scholar](#)

Royce, M. *The Political Theology of European Integration: Comparing the Influence of Religious Histories on European Policies* (London, Palgrave McMillan, 2017). [Google Scholar](#)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108780865.027>

Mudrov, S. A. (2023) "European Integration and the Churches," in Segers, M. and Van Hecke, S. (eds) *The Cambridge History of the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (*The Cambridge History of the European Union*), pp. 659–682. doi: 10.1017/9781108780865.027.