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Differentiated integration (DI) will remain a necessity if Europe wants to overcome stalemate and improve the functioning of the European integration process. The central question is what it will or rather should look like.

**Five potential scenarios**, characterized by a very mixed picture of **effectiveness and legitimacy/democratic accountability**



One cannot predict which of the five scenarios is likely to prevail. However, the analysis shows that three main factors will largely determine the future of a differentiated EUrope:

- 1** The (in)ability of EU institutions and member states to react to severe challenges and fundamental crises;
- 2** The potential effects of more/less differentiation on Europe's political unity;
- 3** The (un)willingness of "pro-European forces" to transfer more competences and pool more sovereignty at the European level.

**Final point:**

Taking these three factors into account, the EU and its member states are likely to prefer scenario 2 – "muddling upwards". They will prefer path-dependent and incremental policy responses to more radical solutions.

But future crises might force Europe in another direction. In any case, whatever the eventual outcome, differentiation will be a core feature of European integration.

